BIJAYANANDA KAR

THE THEORIES OF ERROR IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

INTRODUCTION BY
PROF. GANESHWAR MISRA

Here, for the first time, a comprehensive study of the theories of error in classical Indian philosophy has been made by applying the techniques of linguistic and conceptual analysis. The special feature of the book is that the different tools of analysis are directly applied on the classical Indian arguments.

By way of analysis, it is maintained that the Indian theories of error are neither advancing a psychological account of error nor are the theories advancing any metaphysical theory regarding the ontological status of the object of error but are primarily engaged in unravelling the logical structure of the concept of error. It is held in this work that the *Khyativadas* are theories about the logical nature or erroneous about the ontological status of the object.

Theories like *Satkhyati*, *Akhyati*, *Viparitakhyati*, *Anyathakhyati*, *Atmakhyati*, *Asatkhyati* and *Anirvacaniyakhyati* are analytically studied and the logical geography of each of these theories is properly explicated.

In this book, attempt has been made not only to interest the professionals who are already familiar with the questions with which it deals, but also to provide an introduction to the subject for the general reader.

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the revered memory of my late lamented father

HRUDAYANANDA KAR

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Contents

Abbreviations

BM	*Bhāmatī* by Vācaspati Miśra (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press)
BR	*Bṛhatī* by Prabhākara Miśra (Madras: Madras University Sanskrit Series)
KK	*Kāṣika* by Sucarita Miśra (Trivandrum edition)
NM	*Nyāya Mañjarī* by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (Banaras: Vizianagaram Sanskrit Series)
NS	*Nyāya Sūtras* by Gautama (Poona: Poona Oriental Series)
NV	*Nyāya Vārttika* by Uddyotakara (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica Series)
SB	*Śrī Bhāṣya* by Rāmānuja (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press)
SM	*Siddhānta Muktāvalī* by Nyāya Pañcānana (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press)
SP	*Sapta Padārthī* by Śivāditya Miśra (Banaras: Vizianagaram Sanskrit Series)
SV	*Śloka-vārttika* by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (Banaras: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series)
TC	*Tattva-cintāmoṇi* by Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica Series)
TK	*Tarka-kaumudī* by Laugākṣi Bhāskara (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press)
TS	*Tarka-saṁgraha* by Annaṁ Bhaṭṭa (Bombay: Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series)
VSS	*Vedānta Sūtras with the commentary by Śaṁkarācārya* (tr. G. Thibaut, Banaras: Motilal Banarsidass Publication)

(Other works consulted are referred to in full.)

Preface

The present work was submitted as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree of the Utkal University and was unanimously approved by the Board of Examiners in 1975.

It aims at an analytical study of the different theories of error in Indian philosophy with a view to explicate their logical significance. An independent logical analysis of the theories of error without any preconceived basis of psychology or metaphysics has, so far as I know, not been done. Mostly the theories are presented from psychological or metaphysical standpoint. One of the groups of commentators and interpreters suggest that while discussing the problem of error the classical Indian philosopher is engaged in investigating the various factors that operate in actual process of illusion, hallucination and dream. Another equally important group of commentators and interpreters suggest that while discussing the problem of error the classical Indian philosopher is busy in specifying the ontological status of the object of erroneous cognition.

As against these two suggestions, the work of mine is an humble attempt to show that the classical Indian theories of error are neither advancing a psychological account of error nor any metaphysical account regarding the status of the object of error but are primarily engaged in unravelling the logical structure of the concept of error. It is, however, conceded that while unravelling the logical structure of this concept, some of the classical theorists are led to certain form of psychologism or ontologism. But it is shown in this work that neither such psychologism nor ontologism is the necessary consequence of the original logical analysis of the concept of error that such theorists present.

This work, by way of reinterpreting the classical theories of error, asserts that it is neither the psychological conditions responsible for error nor the ontological bases of error that interest the Indian philosopher. Rather it is the judgement of error which is actually studied and analysed by him. *Khyātivāda*,

according to me, is a theory of judgement and not a theory regarding the ontological status of the object of error. Reviewing the different theories of error from the standpoint of judgemental analysis, it is shown here that these theories are not theories in the scientific sense. As such, evaluating these theories from the scientific point of view is not warranted.

The present analytical study of the theories of error shows that the classical Indian philosophers are primarily engaged in a logical and conceptual analysis of the problem of error and in this respect, at least in some quarters, they largely anticipate the recent movement of linguistic and conceptual analysis

I have many to thank who have helped me in one way or another in completing this work. At the outset I express my deep gratitude to Professor Ganeswar Misra for his constant guidance and very valuable suggestions. As a matter of fact, I have applied the methods of linguistic and conceptual analysis over the issues of Indian philosophy by being inspired through the pioneering research made by Professor Misra.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express sincere thanks to my senior colleagues who have continually encouraged me in this work They are: Dr K.P. Mishra, Dr G.C. Nayak, Mr S.K. Chattopadhyaya and Mr S.R. Mukherji. I wish to put on record my indebtedness to the University Grants Commission for awarding in my favour a research scholarship and a financial assistance for doing this work. I am also indebted to the authorities of the Utkal University for granting me one year study leave in order to complete this research work. My sincere acknowledgements are due to the authors and the publishers whose works directly or indirectly proved to be beneficial in preparing this work. My thanks are due to Messrs Ajanta Books International, Delhi who has undertaken the task of publishing the work.

Lastly, I owe a great debt to Namita, my wife, for her constant good judgement which has definitely helped me in following the fruitful line.

Post-Graduate Department
of Philosophy, Utkal University
April 10, 1978

Bijayananda Kar

Introduction

By Prof. Ganeswar Misra

Dr B. Kar has examined the theories of error in Indian philosophy with the new techniques of linguistic and conceptual analysis. He has very successfully pointed out the distinction between psychological, metaphysical and logical questions which get mixed up in philosophical discussions and create confusion. According to him a psychological theory of error offers a causal explanation on the basis of physical and physiological conditions. But a metaphysical theory revises the concept in such a manner that all judgements become entitled to be called true or all of them are classified as false. A logical theory, on the other hand, aims at a strict, rigorous definition of the concept of error by assigning to it proper place in the system of concepts and showing the similarity with and contrast from its logical neighbours. But the logical theory adopts a material mode of speech for a formal question. As a result formal explanations of logical questions appear as factual theories.

Having thus formulated the criterion of his analysis, he then proceeds to clear another ground of confusion and very successfully points out that the *Khyātivādas* in Indian philosophy are not offering an account of the metaphysical nature of the object of erroneous perception but are attempting to offer an analysis of erroneous judgements. According to him an erroneous judgement is a case of mispredication and is not the case of a strange metaphysical entity appearing as the object of erroneous perception. These theories are not discussing the referent of a predicate expression but are trying to determine the nature of mispredication. His distinction between predicate and predication contributes to clarity in this field. According to him a predicate qua predicate does not refer to anything and hence cannot refer to a strange entity which is the object of false perception. Apredicate can either be rightly applied or

misapplied to a referent. So an erroneous judgement is erroneous not because of its referent but because of mispredication. The logician, in his analysis of false judgement, labours to point out that the judgement becomes wrong not in respect of what is judged but in respect of the way in which it is judged. Error, Dr Kar points out, is not due to *viṣaya* but due to *prakāratā*. In bringing out this distinction a *khyātivāda* is not at all concerned with the nature and metaphysica! status of the object which is judged on every occasion of judging. A theory which aims at doing that must jump out of the logical field to the extra-logical field which a logician can never do so long as he is strictly a logician. A logician's job is to point out the distinction between referring and the descriptive part of judgement and in showing that a judgement goes wrong not in so far as it refers to an object but in misjudging what is referred to. Dr Kar has very rightly pointed out that the Nyāya theory of *Anyathākhyāti* and the Bhāṭṭa theory of *Viparītakhyāti* are strictly logical doctrines in this regard. Both these theories point out that the predicate which has right application in other cases is misapplied in the present case of a false judgement. As a predicate, it is not meaningless. But it falsifies when it is misapplied.

Dr Kar's treatment of the Prābhākara theory of *Akhyāti* is very significant and is a great contribution to clarity. He has very ably pointed out that the Prābhākaras have unnecessarily brought in psychological considerations to a discussion of logical matters. Their appeal to a memory-judgement is irrelevant, since mere recollection itself does not become an independent judgement unless the recollected image is applied to what is presented and in being applied to a present datum, it ceases to be a memory image. It functions as a concept. A concept can either be correctly applied or misapplied. But an image is simply there, if it occurs and that is the end of the matter. His discussion about the *viṣaya* of *Akhyātivāda* is quite illuminating. He maintains very rightly that the mere use of referring expressions does not give rise to a judgement at all unless it is accompanied with a predicate expression which alone is either rightly or wrongly applied resulting in a

valid or invalid judgement. The logical *viṣaya* is not a bare empty particular which significantly figures in metaphysical discussions. The logician, while discussing the concept of *viṣaya*, is only drawing our attention to what is signified by a referring expression and nothing else. A *viṣaya* is a logical tool for the analysis of a judgement, but not a metaphysical entity claiming or not claiming to be there in the world. Quite significantly, therefore, Dr Kar has pointed out that the Prābhākara doctrine of non-discrimination between two incomplete judgements is linked up with their *a priori* metaphysical assumptions and does not remain confined to the linguistic sphere of a logical discussion.

Dr Kar's argument that some Navya-Nyāya logicians have unnecessarily mystified the otherwise clear doctrine of the early Naiyāyikas by appealing to *jñāna lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* is interesting. But since the scope of his work does not allow him to go deep into the entire field of Navya-Nyāya literature, he has desisted from a full discussion of the theory of other important Navya-Nyāya thinkers.

Dr Kar's treatment of two schools of Buddhism and Advaitism has been quite intelligible in the light of the criterion which he formulates in the beginning of his work. According to him these two schools define the concept of error in such a manner that there results a wholesale condemnation of all judgements whatsoever as erroneous. In this respect the *Ātmakhyāti* and *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* theories of these two schools may appear to be metaphysical in character of revisionary type. But here again Dr Kar has tried to show that according to these schools all knowledge is judgemental in character and since all judgements apply concepts which are neither subjective nor objective, Advaitism presents its doctrine as *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* and Buddhism characterises its doctrine as *Ātmakhyāti*. But these two schools have steadily tried to keep psychological questions apart from logical discussions. According to Dr Kar these two schools unmistakably declare that a false judgement is false on account of misjudging but not on account of its referring. Since the logical possibility of misjudging is not ruled out in case of all significant judgements,

every judgement is declared to be corrigible in character. This doctrine of corrigibility of all judgements is purely logical in character and is, therefore, not to be mixed up in any ontological doctrine about the nature and status of the object of erroneous perception. Since both these schools declare concepts to be neither subjective nor objective, they have succeeded in clearly asserting the autonomy of logic as against psychology on the one hand and ontology on the other.

In my considered opinion, Dr Kar's book is a definite landmark in the field of Indian philosophy. So far the *Khyātivādas* constitute a dark area in Indian philosophy in which psychological and metaphysical questions are presented. Dr Kar's application of latest techniques of linguistic and conceptual analysis to this field has resulted in a clarification of the traditional confusion and presenting the logical doctrines both in their strength as well as in their weakness.

Bhubaneswar
May 7, 1978

Ganeswar Misra
Retired Professor of Philosophy
Utkal University

Introduction

Error is an epistemological concept. As such it is contrasted from truth. While the truth-claim of a judgement is not challenged, it is accepted as true and when such truth-claim is challenged, it is regarded as erroneous. In other words, it is only in the context of judgement, the concepts like truth and error are significantly applied and are properly distinguished.

Philosophers, while dealing with the concept of error, have analysed it from logical, metaphysical and psychological points of views. The analysis of error from these different points of views gives rise to different sorts of questions and problems. The question that is raised by a psychological analysis of the concept of error, is quite different from the question that is raised by a logical analysis. And there is also much difference between a metaphysical or ontological discussion of error from those of logic and psychology.

The logical analysis aims at determining the precise meaning of the concept of error. The problem, here, is formulated in the form of a question: 'What is error?' The question is asked with a view to unravel the logical structure of this concept. The attempt is always to clearly formulate the definition, in such a manner that this concept can logically be both related with and contrasted from other cognate concepts like truth, knowledge, etc. To put it in different way, the logical analysis of error is meant for precisely determining its place among the existing order of concepts. Where lies the truth or falsity of a judgement is the fundamental issue that is elucidated in this logical analysis.

But a metaphysician is not so much eager to find out a clear or precise definition of error for correlating as well as contrasting it with other cognate concepts. His interest is primarily to supply an ultimate explanation both for the origin as well as to indicate certain direction in which error can be

avoided. Instead of unravelling the logical structure of the concept of error, he is more interested in revising the existing notion of the concept for the purpose of fitting this concept with his general metaphysical conclusion. The ultimate explanation of the metaphysician may either turn out to be the wholesale acceptance of error or may turn out to be a complete rejection of error. He may startle us either by declaring 'All is erroneous' or 'None is erroneous'. To put it in other words, it is the revision of concept that is advanced by the metaphysician for tackling this problem.

The psychological analysis does not search for a universal explanation regarding the very possibility of error. Psychology, as an empirical science, is rather engaged in supplying particular answers to particular instances of error. If there is an erroneous perception like optical illusion, for instance, then the psychologist is interested in finding out its causes, and limits his discussion entirely to the empirical fold. The psychologist too is not bothered for determining the precise definition of the concept of error. Instead of defining error, the psychologist is engaged in investigating and exploring the causal conditions of error. It is needless to mention here that such causal conditions include physical, physiological and subjective factors.

Very often these three different points of views are not properly distinguished, and a question asked from one point of view, is mistakenly thought to be the question for the other. Hence, the answer that is given to a particular question turns out to be either wrong or an irrelevant one.

While discussing the problem of error from the Indian philosophical point of view, one also finds these different approaches as wholly mixed up. The logical, metaphysical and psychological issues are not always properly kept apart. The Indian philosopher, at times, seems to be asking both about the nature, as well as, the cause of error in the same context. Therefore, *prima facie*, it appears difficult for bringing out the exact issue in which the philosopher is actually engaged. Besides this difficulty, the language in which the discussion about error, for instance, is carried out, is found to be in the material mode of speech, whereas, the problem that is raised in most

cases (if not all) turns out to be purely formal. It is the medium of material mode of speech which shadows the logical significance of the discussion and either sometimes reduces a particular theory to be unduly metaphysical or psychological.

Since psychological analysis of erroneous situation, strictly in the line of empirical investigation, is not widely traceable in all the different Indian theories, modern scholars are led to believe that in India, there is no empirical psychology. "Indian Psychology is based upon Metaphysics."[1] Thus a psychological problem is mixed up with that of metaphysics. Unity is established at the cost of clarity. It is not merely that. Representing the theories psychologically, with prior basis of metaphysics, the modern scholars have completely neglected the logical significance of the nature of the dispute between the rival theories. An analysis of the different Indian theories of error, from an independent logical point of view, is never encouraged. Here in this work, I shall make an attempt to distinguish briefly the different issues (i.e., logical, metaphysical and psychological) raised in connection with some of the Indian theories of error, and thereby, point out how different theories are neither so much engaged in supplying different psychological explanation about error nor also are merely engaged in supplying different metaphysical justifications about error, but primarily, are engaged in unravelling the logical structure of the concept of error. It is, of course, true that in some cases, while determining the logical structure, the Indian philosopher seems to be supporting a metaphysical conclusion. At times, his answer to a logical question is also found to be strongly influenced by certain picture derived from a psychological source. But his leaning towards, either a particular form of metaphysics or that of psychology, is quite an independent matter. That need not necessarily belittle the logical significance of the nature of the argument which he advances.

Error in Indian philosophy is discussed in the different theories known as the *Khyāti-vādas*. *Khyāti* stands for knowledge and hence *Khyāti-vāda* may mean theory of knowledge.

1. Dr. Jadunath Sinha: *Indian Psychology: Perception*, London, 1934, Preface XVI.

But then how can the theory of knowledge turn out to be the theory of error? It may be said that since knowledge in Indian philosophy includes both true, as well as false cognition (a tradition unlike that of the West), and the *Khyāti-vādas* are discussed only in the context of falsity or *bhrama*, each theory, therefore, turns out to be a view about the nature of the cognitive content of the so called erroneous knowledge. There are actually many speculations about this cognitive content. If for *Satkhyāti* this becomes real; for *Asatkhyāti* it is unreal; for *Sadasatkhyāti* both real and unreal; for *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* indeterminable and so on. Here the dispute seems to be purely centring around the specific determination of an epistemic concept, *viz.*, the cognitive content.

Before we pass on to the further details of the different theories from this point of view we may note another peculiarity in the interpretation of these theories of error as advanced by some of the modern scholars. Since the *Khyāti-vādas* are always discussed in the various classical treatises mostly through the illustrations derived from perceptual sources like mistaking a shell to be silver, a single moon to be double, etc., it is argued that each of these theories of error centres its discussion over the nature and content of erroneous perception. In other words, the point of debate is to account for the perception of shell as silver. Thus a theory of error turns out to be a theory on misperception of the form of an illusion, hallucination and so on. Once this is conceded, a psychological rendering of these theories of error seems naturally to follow. Following this rendering, it may be thought that Indian philosophers, in this context, are actually involved in a psychological problem of accounting the abnormal perceptions like illusion, etc. where the senses are found to be deceptive.

How is erroneous perception possible? Is it that the object is not fully perceived (*Akhyāti*) or is it that the object which is somewhere else, is misrepresented to be here and now (*Anyathā-khyāti*) or is it that an idea which is purely internal, is misperceived as an external object (*Ātmakhyāti*) and so on? Thus far the question seems to be psychologically bent. It

needs an explanation about the happening of such abnormal perceptions.

But these explanations in form of different theories are such that they are not limited to empirical scrutiny, so that, none of them can either be rejected or accepted in preference to other. There is clearly the presence of some non-empirical commitment which shows that these different theories, by way of explaining the erroneous phenomenon, not merely restrict themselves to the empirically available data, but freely posit certain further data which are not empirical but metaphysical. It may be noted in this connection that when the Akhyātivādin advances his theory of non-perception he also claims that the object of commonly called misperception is not unreal but real. The Ātmakhyātivādin seems to be maintaining that an internal idea is misperceived as external object. The reality of internal idea cannot, however, be decided by some further empirical testing. All this shows that these different Indian theories of error are not just psychological theories in the empirical sense of the term so that certain decision can be made investigating the different empirical sources.

If they are not empirically bent what then are they? It may be thought that these theories are metaphysical. Since by way of explaining the different cases of misperception these theories, as already pointed out, seem to be asserting some further entities which are clearly not empirical but metaphysical. For example, for the Anyathākhyātivādin, it is argued that the erroneous perception points at a silver which is a unique type of object not ordinarily perceived but is only known through what is called an extraordinary perception (*Jñāna-lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*). It is further claimed that the Advaitic explanation of error as *anirvacanīya* shows the object of error as unique of its kind which can never be described in any of the available empirical categories (*sat*, *asat*, etc.).

So the explanation of the erroneous perception, thus, turns out to be the metaphysical explanation about the nature and status of the object of misperception. A discussion about the empirical concept, thus, turns out to be the discussion about the metaphysical entity. It is thought that in India a psychological analysis of erroneous situation like misperception is not done

empirically but metaphysically. In fact as we have already cited before some have actually taken this metaphysical rendering to be a special feature of the Indian discussion of psychological issues and this point has led many to suppose that Psychology is never separated from Philosophy in this philosophical tradition.[1]

In order to support this supposition a common line of interpretation of all the different theories of error is further sought. It is thought that the different theories are only debating about the nature and status of the *object* of the erroneous cognition.[2] For instance when the shell is misperceived as silver is it real (*sat*) or is it unreal (*asat*) or is it both real and unreal (*sadasat*) or is it neither real nor unreal (*anirvacanīya*) or is it real not in the sense of external object but in the sense of ideas (*vijñānas*)? That means the dispute among various theories is precisely about the being of the object of erroneous cognition. All these theories are answers to the common question: 'Whose *khyāti* is it?' This has the grammatical sanction because the names of these different theories are shown to be the instances of *tatpuruṣa samāsa*. The theory of *Akhyāti*, as a case of *nañya tatpuruṣa*, is argued to be admitting the reality of object but only rejecting its full knowledge.

In this manner, it is thought that all the theories are, though centring their discussion about the erroneous perception, are actually debating about the ontological status of the object that is cognised in such cognition. Psychology is thus shown to be not separately discussed from metaphysics. It is, in this sense, remarked that the Indian philosopher, while searching for the cause of misperception in the sense of finding out a psychological explanation, is gradually led to speculate

1. Prof. M. Hiriyanna: *Indian Philosophical Studies*, p. 19.
2. *Vide*: "The whole discussion of error centres round the content of false cogn tion. The ontological status of the content is conceived differently in different schools of Indian philosophy."— A.K. Roy Chaudhuri: *The Doctrine of Māyā*, p. 10. and ....controversies in Indian philosophy, called the *khyātivādas*, centre round the nature of the false content, *i.e.*, the status of the content which appears rather than of the subjective fact of the apprehension itself."— S.K. Maitra: *Studies in Philosophy and Religion*, p. 210.

in diverse forms about the nature and status of the object of such misperception.

There are certain difficulties in adhering to this interpretation. Firstly, it is quite evident that these different theories of error are not at all theories about erroneous perception alone. It is, of course, true that these different theories, while elucidating their respective positions, are primarily depending on certain common illustrations mostly derived from perceptual sources like mistaking a shell to be silver, a single moon to be double, and a white crystal to be red, etc. But even then, these theories, when they are claimed by the respective schools of philosophies, are not confined to cases of perceptual errors but also are inclusive of various types of conceptual errors. The different theories are precisely meant to explain error as such irrespective of the issue whether it is perceptual or conceptual. For Akhyātivādins as well as Satkhyātivādins not that there is absence of perceptual error but that there is absence of error as such. For Asatkhyātivādins, Anirvacanīyakhyātivādins and Ātmakhyātivādins not that error is only traceable in perceptual source but that all forms of empirical knowledge are, from the very root, grounded on the basis of error. While the Rāmānujāite, for instance, advocates about the reality of silver-cognition where something other than silver is commonly taken to be present, he is surely not merely interested to prove the reality of silver and thus explaining all cases of illusion, hallucination, etc. His main purpose is to defend the absolute claim that no knowledge, so far it is knowledge, can ever be false. Not only perceptual but all forms of knowing must reveal the real, if not completely, at least, partially. Nothing falls short of reality (*Yathārtha sarva vijñānam*). An Asatkhyātivādin, on the other hand, while arguing for the unreality of both the perception of silver as well as shell, is precisely bent upon insisting that all cases of knowledge are dubitable and hence not knowledge proper. A Śaṁkaraite, in the similar line, argues that not only perception but also other forms of empirical knowing carry the logical possibility of being false and therefore the thesis that is ultimately favoured is: 'Everything falls short of the real.' It may be marked here that even in logically more advanced systems like Nyāya, error (*apramā*)

is not discussed under perception but is treated in an altogether independent position, being contrasted from truth (*pramā*).

Some may think here that even if these theories of error are not so much psychological in the sense of accounting for erroneous perception, they may be termed as metaphysical in so far as they are various attempts of determining the exact nature and status of the object of error. Let it, if anybody so insists, not be limited to the cases of perceptual error but also be inclusive of all cases of conceptual errors. It can still be maintained that the theories are different attempts at determining the objects of erroneous cognition as such, irrespective of the fact whether the erroneous cognition is perceptual or inferential or derived through other sources. It is precisely a metaphysical explanation of the content of error that is attempted in all the theories. As it is already said, the dispute is only on the issue whether the object of erroneous cognition is real or unreal or both or neither, etc.

Even this suggestion that the different theories are various attempts at accounting the nature and status of the object of erroneous cognition, does not clarify the position any further. Theories like *Akhyāti* and *Satkhyāti* not merely claim the object of erroneous cognition to be real but also advance a general thesis that both erroneous, as well as, non-erroneous cognition reveal the real. This view thus turns out to be the very denial of error. From the point of view of revelation, absolutely no distinction is admitted between truth and error. In fact, error, in this theory, is in such a way explained that the very logical distinction between truth and error is found to be obliterated. Nothing more, as a point of distinction, is said about the object of error. If the object of error is *sat* then the object of truth is equally *sat*. So the question of determining the nature of the object of error does not arise. So far as the object is concerned there is no difference between truth and error. For the sake of clarity it may be pointed out in this connection that these two theories are not about the determination of the object of erroneous cognition but are attempts about specifying the precise connotation of error as such. How error is to be understood so that it can both be related with and contrasted from other cognate concepts like truth and knowledge seems to

be more important problem for them. The conclusion to which these philosophers point out is that there is no logical distinction between truth and error and all are pieces of knowledge in the commonly accepted sense.

According to *Anirvacanīyakhyāti*, not only the object of the commonly called erroneous cognition is indeterminate but also that of the non-erroneous cognition is argued to be indeterminate. Once this is accepted, it can easily be marked that this theory too like the previous ones is not actually aiming at determining the object of erroneous cognition. The more significant point for the theory is to declare that no empirical cognition can ever be fully unfalsifiable being fundamentally involved with names and forms (*nāma* and *rūpa*). It is the *jñāna* (cognition) and not the object of *jñāna* which is precisely argued out by this theory to be *anirvacanīya.*

It is maintained that *Asatkhyāti* claims about the unreality of both silver as well as shell. Hence it is *asat* which is to be regarded as the referent of all cognitions. Referent need not again mean, in this connection, another deeper mysterious reality. That would be as good as searching for Meinongian objects by maintaining that *asat* is also a kind of *sat* though not of an empirical type but of a deeper metaphysical type. The theory of *Asatkhyāti* seems to be more plausible when it is understood in terms of the remark that all empirical knowledge is unreal in the sense of not pointing out at anything whatsoever. The empirical knowledge of the object is, from the very start, infected with mental conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) and hence is *asat.* So it is the knowledge which is *asat* and not the object of knowledge which is maintained by the theory to be *asat.*

Anyathākhyāti has been pictured as the doctrine according to which something previously known in some other context is mistakenly cognised to be the present object. In this manner *Anyathākhyāti* is understood in terms of *anyatra* (elsewhere) and *anyakāla* (elsewhen). But this, by no means, seems to follow from the meaning of the term, *anyathā* (elsewise). This unnecessarily clouds the logical significance of the doctrine and reads into it psychologism and mysticism. Error is defined

in terms of '*atasmiṁs tad iti jñānam*'[1] meaning thereby cognising (in the sense of judging) something as what it is not. It is the cognising which is found defective and not the object.[2] The object remains what it is. That is of no concern for a logical analysis of erroneous cognition. So to search for a peculiar kind of object for erroneous cognition is simply to miss the point.

Why insist on the nature and the status of the object of error? It is the belief in the *a priori* existence of object which unduly represents the different theories to be metaphysical whereas the different theories, as we have indicated before, are not metaphysically bent. It is simply pointless to debate about the erroneous object. The classical Indian philosophers do not debate among themselves about the nature and status of the object of erroneous cognition. Error is always taken to be the attribute of cognition (*mithyā jñāna*) and never the attribute of object (*mithyā vastu*). A discussion which is significant only in the epistemological sphere is wrongly thought to be of metaphysical significance.

The term '*khyāti*', from the philosophical point of view, implies knowledge—the faculty of discriminating objects by appropriate designation.[3] In case of a *mithyā jñāna*, it is the discriminative faculty of knowledge which goes wrong and hence the knowledge becomes false. To put it in a different manner, in all cases of valid knowledge (*pramā*) there is the appropriate discrimination or judging; and in cases of invalid knowledge there is misdiscrimination or misjudging. In this light it can be seen that the different *Khyāti-vādas* are merely different ways of explaining the discriminative or judging aspect of knowledge. The problem is to precisely determine the nature of the judgement from a strict logical point of view. What is judgement? Is it that judgement never completely fails in describing something (*Satkhyāti*)? Or, is it that it always fails in describing (*Asatkhyāti*)? Under these two broad heads

1. Uddyotkara: *Nyāya Vārttika*, Bib. Indi., Calcutta, 1907, p. 26.1.4.
2. Vātsāyana: *Bhāṣya* on *Nyāya Sūtra*, IV.2.35.
3. *Vide*: P.K. Gode and C.G. Karve: (ed.) V.S. Apte's *The Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary*, Vol. III, Poona, 1958, p. 641.

the different Indian theories of error seem to be adequately fitted.

Sat, *Asat*, etc., are thus shown to be not adjectives of the objects referred by a particular piece of knowledge but those are merely the adjectives of knowledge (in the sense of judgement). Thus the terms like *Satkhyāti* (*sati+khyāti*), *Asatkhyāti* (*asati+khyāti*), *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* (*anirvacanīya+khyāti*), *Ātmakhyāti* (*ātma viṣayā+khyāti*), *Anyathākhyāti* (*anyathā+khyāti*), etc. can be taken to be the instances of *Karmadhāraya samāsa* instead of *Tatpuruṣa*. This actually fits into the philosophical discussion much better than the former interpretation. Let me briefly point out how some of the important *Khyāti-vādas* tackle the problem of error while determining the nature of judgement from a logical point of view, as mentioned above.

(i) *Anyathākhyāti*

Nyāya is not committed to accept a non-conceptualised form of knowledge. Knowledge of all varieties is bound to be conceptual. The *avyapadeśya* (non-verbal) is only assumed as a postulate in the system upon which the proper knowledge structure is built. The knowledge is presentational in so far as the judgement refers to the object. It is precisely here the question of *pramā* and *apramā* is raised. When the judgement describes the referent as it is, it is true. True judgement stands for judging the referent in that form of attributes which actually belong to it (*Tadvati tat-prakārakam jñānam pramā*) and false judgement is the judging of a referent in some form of attributes other than those which actually belong to it (*Tadabhāvati tat-prakārakam jñānam bhramaḥ*). It does not mean, however, that the referent asserted in a wrong judgement is absolutely missed and that the judgement fails to hook itself on to its referent. The referent that is judged as silver, for instance, does not mean that it is not there. It is only the wrong judgement of shell as silver which is later on rectified but not the referent itself. Error is due to the descriptive part of judgement. In other words, in cases of wrong judgements the referent is judged as something otherwise (*anyathā*). Error, thus to Nyāya, is only a case of misjudging or mispre-

dication. Here the philosopher is only interested to bring out the logic of the idea of error. His account does not refer to perceptual errors. The problem is logical and is mistakenly presented to be psychological or ontological because of the material mode of speech through which the arguments are actually presented. It is only with some later Naiyāyikas who introduce the *jñāna-lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* to interpret the perceptual errors like shell-silver, etc. the logical thesis of Anyathākhyāti is unfortunately clouded. The basic Nyāya argument, at least in this context, is purely formal without having any prior commitment to any form of ontology. With little modifications the central arguments, that are developed by *Viparīta-khyāti-vāda* and *Sadasatkhyāti-vāda*, can also be shown to be the instances of formal type. In these cases too, the logical analysis of the concept of error is pursued and error is conceded to be due to mispredication.

(ii) *Anirvacanīyakhyāti*

It is indeterminateness (*anirvacanīyatva*) which is argued by the Advaitins to be the special feature of the judgement. They agree with the Naiyāyikas that error is due to mispredication. They, by further analysis of the nature of each judgement, attempt to show that there is always the logical possibility of mispredication in case of each judgement. If my describing the present referent as silver is a case of misdescription in the sense that the silver predicate does not belong to the referent, then equally my describing the referent as shell can be argued to be a case of possible misdescription. To describe 'this' as shell is also to attribute shell-characteristic on this. I can never know the thing without describing or characterising. And there is always the chance of mistake in describing. Hence all descriptive judgements, by definition, turn out to be fallible. They may at best presuppose the referent but cannot reveal the referent. Hence their truth-value cannot be determined. For Śaṁkara, since no language can be possible without employing class-concepts, description and predication, etc., reality (*i.e.*, Brahman—the logical referent) cannot be comprehended by means of language or judgemental way of knowing.

The Post-Śaṁkaraites very often talk of *anirvacanīya* in terms of *bhāvarūpa.* The modern scholars, while interpreting Anirvacanīyakhyāti, explain *bhāvarūpa* as something positive, meaning thereby, that for Advaita, the content of error must refer something real and not absolute void or *śūnya.* This has been emphasised in order to distinguish Advaitism from *Śūnyavāda.* But the term, *bhāvarūpa* cannot mean anything positive. Because in that case *bhāvarūpa* and *bhāva* would be the same. The nature of the judgement is such that following Advaita logic we can neither say it to be positive (*bhāva*) nor negative (*abhāva*) nor both positive and negative but neither. The judgement merely has a semblance of being true in the sense of correctly describing but actually it always fails in describing by adding certain names and forms foreign to reality. The modern scholars seem to be interpreting *bhāvarūpa* as something positive because of their unnecessary bias for an ontological rendering which is completely foreign to the epistemological discussion of error.

A very similar approach is also advanced both by the Mādhyamikas and the Yogācāras, though with an altogether different fomulation. The Asatkhyātivādins, though advance a theory of judgement which declares judgements to be false (*asat*) instead of indeterminable yet their central line of argument almost remains the same. Both the Mādhyamikas and the Yogācāras stand as the critic of language and clearly repudiate any relation between language and reality. That error is due to conceptualisation (*kalpanā*) is to be marked in this connection. The Yogācāras who deny the objectivity and admit the bare experience clearly adhere to this form of reasoning of repudiating the use of concepts. The general features like cowness have no objective reality (to any schools of Buddhism) and are entirely due to the nature of thought.[1]

All these different philosophies have a common tone in so far as their views on the nature of judgement are concerned. It is the finding of erroneous character in each judgement from a logical point of view which, of course, subsequently led them

1. Prof. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, London, p. 221 (within brackets mine).

to different metaphysical speculation. If for some the logical referent of all judgements becomes absolute real (*Brahman*), for others it is unreal (*Asat* or *Śūnya*) and for others it is idea (*Vijñāna*). But these different revisionary metaphysical conclusions do not, in any way, affect the logical nature of the argument which is fundamentally adhered to by each of them. The different arguments that they advance in respect of their theories of error, are more plausible only when those are seen through this logical analysis without any prior prejudice to some form of ontological commitment.

(iii) *Satkhyāti*

In opposition to the Advaita theory of error, the Rāmānujāites advance a radically opposite theory according to which all judgements, whatsoever, can never completely fall short of the referent. What is asserted in any judgement has definitely an objective basis. In this sense there cannot be complete misdescription or mispredication. All attributes, according to this logical analysis, are objectively real. Hence there is no possibility of error in the sense of lack of objective counterpart. The different objects of reference are already related and it is only our limited intelligence which ordinarily takes the ever-related objects as not being related. The shell is not absolutely non-silvery. Nor the silver is absolutely non-shelly. There is, however, contradiction in holding shell as distinguished from silver to be silver; but there is no contradiction in holding shell to be silver if shell is already intrinsically related (*apṛthak siddhi*) with silver.

Whatever may be the ultimate fate of this type of logical reasoning, to whatever revisionary form of metaphysics it may lead, it seems to me an irrelevant point. It is a matter of pity that the argument of this theory is never analysed from the logical side and different modern scholars have either not discussed it at all or have presented the argument as a handmaid to a particular form of metaphysics.

The theory of *Akhyāti*, as advanced by the Prābhākaras, the early Sāṁkhyaites and some Jainas' views on error seem to be not very much different from that of Rāmānujāites so far

as the logical nature of the argument is concerned. Apart from certain doctrinal differences the argumentative side almost remains same. It may be admitted, however, that Akhyāti-vāda cannot always restrict itself to the logical nature of the judgement, and very often is found to be confusing logical problem with that of psychological one.

In the present work, I shall first discuss the Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of error and then propose to discuss the views of the Mīmāṁsakas and the Naiyāyikas. In the last two chapters, I shall confine myself to the accounts of error as presented by the Buddhists and the Śaṁkaraites respectively. This work will not discuss the views on error advanced by the Jaina and the Sāṁkhya philosophers. This does not, however, mean that their views are completely negligible in the Indian philosophical context. Only for the sake of intensive study I consider it better to confine myself to some of the important as well as widely-discussed theories of error.

1

The Viśiṣṭādvaita Theory of Error

The classical philosopher, Vimuktātman mentions five theories of error out of which one is known as *Asatkhyāti* and all the rest are *Ātmakhyāti*, *Akhyāti*, *Anyathākhyāti* and *Anirvacanīyakhyāti*.[1] Vimuktātman has not mentioned the theory of *Satkhyāti*. The modern exponents of Advaita, however, group these four above-mentioned theories under a general title, *viz.*, *Satkhyāti* meaning thereby that all these four theories admit a real substratum of all erroneous cognitions what *Asatkhyāti* seems to deny.[2] But the theory of *Satkhyāti* which is more widely known in Indian philosophy and which I will discuss in the present chapter is not in any way a general theory to which all the said four theories belong, but rather a distinctly original theory developed by the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Vedānta. Dasgupta refers to the Jaina account of error by the name of *Satkhyāti*[3] which would be quite opposite to the theory of *Satkhyāti* as expounded by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. That Jaina account of error may at best be similar to the theory of *Anyathākhyāti* maintained by the Naiyāyikas.

The Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of error is discussed by many exponents of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school and all of them, in common, hold that all judgements are true (*yathārtha sarva vijñānam iti Veda vidāṁ matam*—SB I, I, I). The very first writer, in this regard, is Nāthamuni (early part of tenth century) and his *Tattva Vindu: Bhrāntyadhikaraṇasiddhānta* is, now of course, an extinct

1. *Vide*: *Iṣṭasiddhi*. "*ātmakhyātir asatkhyātir akhyātiḥ khyātiranyathā tathā'nirvacanīyakhyātir iti etat khyātipañcakam*". Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 65, 1933.
2. T.M.P. Mahadevan: *The Philosophy of Advaita*, Madras, p. 82.
3. *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, p. 183.

work. His grandson Alavandar Yamunācārya (last part of tenth century), the author of *Āgama-prāmāṇya*, contributes further to the theory of error known as *Yathārtha-khyāti* as developed by Nāthamuni. Rāmānuja (eleventh century), defending this *Yathārtha-khyāti* in his *Śri-bhāṣya*, developed the theory with a new name, '*Satkhyāti*'. Rāmānuja's account of error is further defended and elaborated by Sudarśana Sūri (thirteenth century), a commentator of *Śri-bhāṣya* (*Śruta-prakāśikā*) and also by Ātreya Rāmānuja in his *Nyāya-kuliśa*. Venkaṭanātha (fourteenth century), also known as Vedānta Deśika, is the next important Viśiṣṭādvaitin who discusses error elaborately in his *Śata-duṣaṇī*, *Nyāya-Pariśuddhi*, *Tattvamuktākalpa* and *Sarvārtha Siddhi*. Śrinivāsācārya of seventeenth century is another famous Rāmānujāite who discusses *Satkhyāti* along with other rival theories of error.

Viśiṣṭādvaita is not a distinct school of philosophy like Nyāya or Sāṁkhya or such other schools. It is only a particular interpretation of the original Vedānta school. The differences that are there among the various sects of the Vedānta are mainly rooted on some religious views regarding life and its destiny. While one sect, for instance, believes in creation to be an essential part of God (Rāmānuja) the other has a firm faith in complete difference between creation and God (Mādva).

All this need not necessarily underestimate their philosophical excellence. In order to justify a particular religious view of life the propounders of the various sects often go deep into metaphysical speculation. And in order to substantiate their metaphysical speculation, they often resort to logical discussion of various relevant topics. In short, a religious view of life is supported by a form of metaphysics. And further, as we shall see, there is the attempt of defending that form of metaphysics by adhering to a kind of logical analysis of the nature of epistemic terms and judgements. This logical discussion does not, however, adequately conform to the standard formal reasoning. It is mainly carried on with a prior view to maintain a particular metaphysical viewpoint that suits a religious view of life.

So far as Viśiṣṭādvaita is concerned, here it is not necessary to discuss its specific religious view of life. The main aim is to show how a problem like error is tackled by the Viśiṣṭādvaitin. The discussion about the problem of error, as we shall see, is mostly having a sanction of logical reasoning but such logical reasoning is ultimately leading to a form of metaphysics. To put briefly, here in this system, there is, of course, no sign of independent logical discussion of the problem of error, rather always such discussion is metaphysically oriented. But this point need not necessarily lead one to conclude that the logical reasoning which the Viśiṣṭādvaitin advances for tackling the problem of error, for instance, carries no significance. At least it is one step further for conceptual illumination.

Like other theories, *Satkhyāti*, though a theory about error as such, is also discussed through the instances of perceptual errors. That there is sometimes erroneous perception is itself a fact. It is an undisputed fact that people do commit errors though very often they correct those errors. Even if perception is accepted as one of the most important valid means of knowing, yet through that very medium of knowing sometimes one perceives something which in fact is not real but apparent.

This problem about perception in particular and about knowing in general is very vital for any epistemological discussion. In the Western tradition, specially for the empiricists, the fact of illusion, hallucination, etc. always brings problem about the authenticity of perceptual knowledge. The different philosophers like realists and phenomenalists, etc. take different moves in meeting this problem. The judgement that there is silver is at once found to be inconsistent when it is marked that the referent of the said judgement is actually not silver but only shell. If perception is a form of knowing then the perceptual judgement 'This is silver' must be true. But here the judgement, 'This is silver' is found to be incoherent with the later judgement, 'This is shell'. All this doubtlessly challenges the validity of perceptual knowledge. Naive-realism meets the problem by redefining the nature of the object of knowledge. It asserts that the judgement of illusion, 'This is

silver' is as objective as the judgement of veridical perception, 'This is shell'. In fact, according to this view illusion does not mean non-objectivity. Only the object of the judgement 'This is silver' is a short-lived one. It exists so long as it is perceived. Hence the problem of error ceases to be a problem because on all occasions including error the judgement is having a corresponding referent. In other words, all judgements, whether referring to illusion or to veridical perception, are true and not false. The knowledge-claim in each case is guaranteed.

The phenomenalist, on the other extreme, meets the problem not by redefining the nature of the object of knowledge but by altering the logical tone of the judgement of illusion. While according to the previous theory the judgement, 'This is silver' claims the existence of silver, according to the present theory 'This is silver' is actually meant as 'This seems to me to be silver'. Once the language of the judgement is, in such manner, altered, it can be easily seen that no more the problem of inconsistency between the judgements of erroneous perception and those of veridical perception arises. The inconsistency between 'This is silver' and 'This is shell' is not present in 'This seems to me to be silver' and 'This seems to me to be shell'. 'This seems to me to be silver' can never be corrected or sublated by any other judgement. Thus the problem of error is argued to have been solved.

Of course, our purpose is not here to discuss in detail the account of error as given either by the realists or by the phenomenalists. The only thing, to be emphasised, is that these different theories attempt to solve the problem by twisting the language of error.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins too, as I shall point out, in course of this discussion, attempt to solve the problem by twisting the language of error. But this change of language is not always well-noticed because all through, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, like other Indian philosophers, adopt a material mode of speech for carrying out their discussion. Since these philosophers are discussing the problem through perceptual illusions, hallucinations, etc. many assume that they are engaged in a psychological question and thus their problem is purely an empirical one.

There is, however, a great difficulty in concluding Viśiṣṭādvaitins' theory of error to be an empirical one. Because if the theory would be empirical, it, like the scientific theories, would be confirmed or confuted as against its rival theories. But both *Satkhyāti* as well as *Anirvacanīyakhyātl*, for instance, equally claim for validity in spite of their being absolutely opposed to each other. Their absolute opposition becomes explicit; while according to *Satkhyāti* all judgements give true account of the referent, for *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* all judgements give false account of the referent. None of these theories is decided to be true as against the other so far as the empirical facts are concerned.

Like many others the Viśiṣṭādvaitins maintain that knowledge implies both subject and object.[1] It is the subject which knows the object, by means of its essential attribute, *i.e.*, knowledge (*Dharmabhūta jñāna*). The reference of all knowledge is not the series of passive sensations, but the complex object. Knowledge does not mean that it is to first passively receive the sensations and then it is to form the object by the application of the categories of understanding (a view which is advocated in Kantian epistemology). Here "Knowledge is not a synthetic construction, but is purely a spiritual process by which things are revealed. The objects in nature are given and are not made by thought. It is the function of thought only to reveal them and not to create them."[2] The objects that are known are all characterised by attributes and there is no object of knowledge which is devoid of attributes.[3] Rāmānuja's saying that "the indeterminate knowledge is the apprehension of an object devoid of some qualifications but not all qualifications"[4] implies that the so called indeterminate knowledge

1. SB, II.II.29.
2. P.N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Adyar Library, Madras, Second Edition, 1946, p. 24.
3. *Vide*: "*saviśeṣa-vastu-viṣayatvāt sarva-pramāṇānām*", SB, I.I.I, p. 28, and "*ataḥ sarvaṁ jñānam satyaṁ saviśeṣaviṣayaṁca*", Śrinivāsācārya: *Yatīndramata Dīpikā*, Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, p. 14.
4. "*nirvikalpakaṁ nāma kenacidviśeṣaṇa viyuktasya grahaṇaṁ na sarvaviśeṣarahitasya*", SB, I.I.I, p. 27.

is virtually the same as the usually known determinate knowledge.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins do not admit the possibility of attributeless object. The knowledge of such object is also determinate as it is the knowledge of the object with qualities (*saviśeṣa vastu*). There is, therefore, no indeterminate knowledge of pure being. The indeterminate knowledge is regarded as a psychological myth. All knowledge, according to these philosophers, is determinate (*Savikalpaka*) and hence judgemental in character. There cannot be any pre-judgemental knowledge in the logical sense of the term. The so called distinction between first level comprehension (*prathama-piṇḍa-grahaṇa*) and second level comprehension (*dvitīya-piṇḍa-grahaṇa*) is to be made within the determinate or judgemental level. All judgements are true in so far as they all grasp and reveal their corresponding objects. Truth is inherent to the very nature of judgement.[1] It is argued that if the judgement is not inherently true then it cannot be made true by any other external source.

It is this fundamental point of judgement being intrinsically true that raises the problem of error. Since all judgements are conceded to be true by themselves the very fact of error needs to be explained. If all judgements are true in so far as they truly reveal the referent then what about errors where there is the equal claim for revealing the referent though actually there is none? To put it in other words, how one is to distinguish between truth and error? In what sense exactly the contention that all judgements are true is to be fitted with the fact of error?

It appears that once we accept the Viśiṣṭādvaitic contention that all judgements are true, a false judgement would then be simply inconceivable in the logical sense of the term. But it is equally true that this denial of the very possibility of false judgement has got to be further explained in view of the very fact of error. The sceptical contention that the very fact of error challenges all talk about knowledge seems to be highly

1. "*...vedavādinaḥ pramāṇatvaṁ svataḥ prāhuḥ parataḥ ca apramāṇatvaṁ*"—*Sarva Darśana Saṁgraha* of Mādhavācārya, edited by Mm. Vasudev Sastri Abhyankara, Govt. Oriental Series No. 1, p. 279.

compelling. It is precisely here that the Viśiṣṭādvaitins' account requires to be further elaborated. Before this elaboration let me make a digression for the sake of clarity.

In Indian philosophy generally the term *jñāna* is used in a wider sense so as to include both true as well as false cognition. It also sometimes includes hypothetical argument, conjecture and doubt, etc. It is only the term *pramā*, which is exclusively used for true judgement, (*yathārtha jñāna*) can be treated as parallel of what is said in English language, 'knowledge'. *Pramā* or true judgement, therefore, stands for the correct description of the referent. *Pramā* is to be construed as the judgement which truly characterises the referent. All cases of *apramā*, hence, mean just the reverse. It is the judgement which does not truly characterise the referent. So if one excludes the cases of conjecture, doubt and hypothetical argument, etc. then *jñāna* may be taken as equivalent to judgement. This judgement may further be subdivided into true and false once in so far as the characterisation of the referent is concerned. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins' remark 'All judgements are true' (*Yathārtha sarva vijñānam*) seems to be directly opposite to this general trend of Indian philosophy. In fact they do not distinguish between *jñāna* and *pramā*, so far as the characterisation of the referent is concerned. This means that *apramā* as false characterisation of the referent is, according to this view, something not logically possible. What other systems designate as *apramā* in the sense of failing to characterise the referent, that this view interprets as *pramā* in the sense of truly characterising the referent.

But how is this possible? How can so called *apramā* be interpreted to be the same as *pramā*? How does the Viśiṣṭādvaita establish the truth of all judgements? How is it maintained that all judgements are true characterisations?

Here the Viśiṣṭādvaitins resort to what is known as the famous doctrine of *pañcīkaraṇa* (quintuplication).[1] This doctrine suggests that there is unity in everything. All things share in all things and contain common characteristics. Every-

1. "*Pañcīkaraṇaprakriyayā pṛthvyādi-sarva-bhūtānāṁ sarvatra vidyamānatvāt*", Śrinivāsācārya, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

thing involves every other thing (*sarvam sarvātmakam*). Things of same element have structural affinity along with their own distinguishing features. The objects of the physical world, which are all compounds, contain all the five *bhūtas* or gross elements, though in varying proportions. Thus in the case of the 'mirage', what is being looked at is a heated sandy waste which contains not only earth which is the preponderating part of it, but also water, however slight, and the apprehension of water there, it is said, is therefore only of what is actually presented to the eye.[1] It is because of similarity, shell appears as silver. At least brightness seems to be a common feature shared by both the objects. According to Rāmānuja the similarity of brightness means some sort of material identity between the two objects. "Likeness is to him another term for partial identity of material."[2] So it is argued that what is perceived is actually presented. All such explanation is possible because there is the fundamental assumption regarding the unity of the physical world. While a rope is mistaken to be a snake it is said the three gross elements,[3] by the mixture of which a snake is made, are also the elements by the mixture of which a rope is made, so that in rope there is something of snake. In this manner, it is argued that no unreal object is ever apprehended. "The constituent elements of every object being in every other thing, every so called illusion can be similarly explained away."[4] I will not refer to all the different varieties of illusions that are interpreted in the realistic mode by the Rāmānujāites. Since in all cases the point that is argued to have been established is the same, *viz*., the reality of the object of apprehension as against the ordinary notion of its unreality. Not only cases of perceptual illusions but also dreams are interpreted to be objectively real. With the authority of the *Upaniṣads*, it is said that objects appeared in dreams, are actually there at the time, though as in the case of

1. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophical Studies*, p. 58.
2. "*tadeva sadṛśam tasya yat taddravyaika-deśa-bhāk*": SB, p. 184.
3. These three gross elements are fire (*agni*), water (*ap*) and earth (*pṛthivī*), the other two being ether (*ākāśa*) and air (*vāyu*).
4. S. Chatterjee & D. Datta: *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, 1948, 3rd revised Edn., p. 473.

the yellow conch, they are perceivable only by the dreamer himself.[1] All this shows that the Rāmānujāites do not feel hesitant to make any metaphysical assumption for holding the doctrine of *Satkhyāti*. The doctrine of *pañcīkaraṇa* is very significant for the explanation of all kinds of error. Either directly or indirectly the object of all erroneous apprehension is said to be constituted of any of the five elements.

This doctrine is definitely not scientific. As in that case it is to be either confirmed or confuted by facts. But by any scientific measure it is at least not yet possible to bring out the silvery elements from shell. This doctrine, therefore, is taken to be a metaphysical one. As metaphysical, however, its justification in terms of empirical facts does not arise.

I will not here argue out the logical cogency of such metaphysical doctrine. The highlight of imagination by the help of which the shell is argued to have contained silvery elements or the rope having snaky elements will not be here disputed. The point that is to be examined here is the logical basis of such a doctrine of error. Once one grants the doctrine of *pañcīkaraṇa*, one is to admit that no judgement can ever be a false characterisation. What is asserted in any judgement has definitely an objective basis. In this sense, there cannot be any misdescription or mispredication. All attributions are thought to be objectively real. Hence there is no possibility of error in the sense of lack of objective counterpart. Judgement cannot have any attribution which is not having any objective basis. The different objects are already related in reality and it is only our limited intelligence which ordinarily takes the ever-related objects as not being related. The shell is not absolutely non-silvery. Nor the silver is absolutely non-shelly. There is, however, contradiction in holding shell as distinguished from silver to be silver, but there is no contradiction in holding shell to be silver if shell is already intrinsically related (*apṛthak siddhi*) with silver.

It may be noted in this connection that though according to Viśiṣṭādvaita the empirical objects are real and never are regarded to be illusory (as in Advaita) still these objects are

1. *Vide*: SB, III.II.1-3. Here Rāmānuja quotes *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, IV.III.10.

said to be absolutely inseparable in the ultimate reality. In fact, it is suggested that these objects, either mental or physical, are related as attributes (*guṇa*) of the ultimate reality (*Brahman*). The attributes cannot by definition stand apart from the substance. Hence the reality is the complex unity of both substance and attributes. It is hence termed as Viśiṣṭādvaita.[1]

In this manner it is argued that not only the so called erroneous judgement 'This is silver' is non-erroneous but all judgements, since they refer to the same reality, are non-erroneous. All judgements are true in so far as characterisation is taken into account. The judgement describes the referent by such attributes (*viśeṣa*) which actually belong to it. Error, as mis-attribution or mis-characterisation, is something absolutely impossible in the logical framework adopted by the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. There cannot be any mis-characterisation since all characterisations point at corresponding referents.

The discrepancy that is ordinarily said to be there between 'This is silver' and 'This is shell' is to be located somewhere else and not in the judgemental plane. So far as judging is concerned, in all cases judging is bound to be true. Error is not due to misjudging but is due to lack of practical value. To put it in other words, the ordinary distinction between truth (*pramā*) and error (*apramā*) is explained in terms of pragmatic consideration (*Vyavāhara guṇa*). While a true judgement both reveals the object as well as possesses practical value, a false judgement only reveals the object but does not possess practical value.[2]

Since revelation of object is admitted both in cases of ordinarily called true judgements as well as false judgements, we can say that these philosophers here redefine the term 'judgement'. In their sense, a judgement, in so far as it is a judgement, is bound to be true (*yathārtha*). A false judgement (*Asat khyāti*) is by definition ruled out.

The merit of this view is to point out the significant linguis-

1. *Cf.* SB, p. 132 (Com.). "*Viśiṣṭāntarbhāva eva aikyam*".
2. Vedānta Deśika: "*yathāvastithavyavahārānuguṇaṁ jñānaṁ pramā*", *Nyāya Pariśuddhi*, Chowkhamba Edn., p. 92 and *Yatīndramata Dīpikā*, I.9, p. 3.

tic point that knowledge must be real. It draws our attention to the logical point that one cannot say one knows something yet what he knows is false. The word 'knowledge' is in such a way used (at least conventionally) that one cannot both say that something is known yet it is not the case. To put it in other words, if I say 'I know something' then it logically follows that it must be the case. If I, on the contrary, maintain that I know yet it may not be the case, then I may be said simply of misusing the word 'know'. To say that one knows something entails that what one knows is the case. But this meaning of the term 'know' though linguistically becomes unquestionable yet is it not a fact that people do commit errors? People claim many things to have known. But even if they claim still it does not logically follow that what they claim is really so. My knowing something as P does not guarantee that P is true. The truth-claim of a proposition is not same as the truth of a proposition.[1] Then even if knowledge is always taken as real or the correct apprehension of the thing as it is yet the very fact of error raises a problem. It is clear that the Viśiṣṭādvaitins' contention that all judgements are true in the sense of truly characterising the referent directly follows from their insistence for taking the verbal use of the term 'know' as paradigm one. In ordinary language there is a gap between *my knowing something as P* and *P as the case*. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins go beyond the ordinary usage and assert that my knowing P always implies P. This modification, as suggested by these philosophers, has become possible by a revision made in the conceptual framework.

The epistemological consequence is that all cases of knowledge-claim and knowledge become identical. It may be noted in this connection that though in English usage the word 'knowledge' always stands for right apprehension yet knowledge-claim and knowledge, the factual and the linguistic uses are clearly distinguished. It is true that on many occasions our knowledge-claim is justified and then knowledge-claim becomes identical with knowledge proper. But what is about the deceptive knowledge-claim?

1. *Cf.* A.J. Ayer: *The Problem of Knowledge*, ch. I.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins advocate that what we ordinarily take as error is not error in the sense of lack of objectivity. The object of such judgement is not non-existent. It is real. The distinction between a true and false judgement is not to be made from the point that true judgement corresponds to fact while false judgement does not. False judgement has also an equal claim for correspondence. Rāmānuja argues that if the object of erroneous judgement is totally non-existent then how at all is it apprehended.[1] It appears that when the Rāmānujāites advocate for the truth of all judgements, they point at the *meaning* of truth and while they explain the ordinary distinction between a true and a false judgement in terms of *vyavāhara guṇa*, they seem to be hinting at the *test* of truth.

It is true that at the time when we experience shell-silver illusion, we know it definitely that we perceive silver which means that somehow silver must be accepted to be present in perception otherwise we may again be landed into the danger of disbelieving the authenticity of our perceptual knowledge. Ordinarily when one perceptual knowledge is found to be delusive, a metaphysical sceptic, by means of a special reasoning of his own, challenges the authenticity of all knowledge and thereby recommending a drastic denial of knowledge as such. The logical consequence of such a point of view is that all judgements are necessarily corrigible and probable in character.

But the Viśiṣṭādvaitin takes a diametrically different move in the game of reasoning. Instead of rejecting all knowledge as erroneous, he interprets all knowledge as valid. With the authority of *upaniṣads*, Rāmānuja holds that false judgements are revelatory as far as they go. When one asserts that one perceives silver in the beach one actually sees silver in the beach. The mistake he makes is not in saying that he sees silver but in not saying he sees shell. The piece of silver one perceives is actually the part of the shell, the silvery part. Only it is not a piece of silver, any one gives money in exchange

1. *Vide*: SB, p. 83.

or that would look nice as a spoon. This is because the object is more shell-y than silver-y.[1]

This shows that the ordinarily erroneous judgement does not confirm to practical test. It does not serve any useful purpose. It is not because the erroneous judgement misdescribes the referent but rather it does not create any interest so far as life is concerned. Neither one can sell the illusory silver in the market nor the illusory snake can bite somebody. While a small portion of the object of the erroneous judgement is silver the larger part of it is shell. That is why the referent, while it is judged as silver, does not serve any purpose and when it is judged as shell it serves the purpose. This shows, no judgement either true or false can describe the referent completely. Both of them are partial so far as describing is concerned. The Viśiṣṭādvaitin, it appears, admits degrees so far as truth and error are considered. There is clear suggestion in Viśiṣṭādvaita that only the ideal form of judgement which is not only valid or practically efficient but also all-comprehensive in character can be said to be completely descriptive. Such a judgement is possible in individual self's attaining liberation.[2]

However, in this system the question of truth (*yathārthatā*) is not to be mixed up with the issue of all-comprehensibility or complete description. *Yathārthatā* is admitted so far as the referent is actually referred by all kinds of judgements whether true or false. Truth in the ordinary sense (*pramātva*) is only decided when the judgement refers to the *preponderating* part of the referent and by that alone the judgement at issue becomes practically efficient.

It appears that the real dispute between the Satkhyātivādins and their rivals is not based on any fact. There is no factual disagreement as to the nature of error. All of them agree that errors do occur. A Satkhyātivādin never says that the so called illusory silver is the same as the ordinary silver or a māyāvādin does not subscribe to the view that the world is illusory in the same sense in which the mirage is. It is, therefore,

1. Potter: *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, Prentice Hall, India, 1965, pp. 217-218.
2. Hiriyanna, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

misleading to suggest that their views obliterate the ordinary distinction between truth and error.[1] Both of them, as philosophers, do not assert something which may affect the ordinary notions about things. Either by asserting all judgements to be true or to be false, the philosopher is not making a statement of fact. Here the philosopher's judgement though is of grammatically similar structure with that of an ordinary empirical judgement yet there is a logical difference between the two. Philosopher's judgement is not a categorical statement in the ordinary sense of the term. It is an implicit recommendation about judgements as a whole.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitins' contention 'All judgements are true' is itself not a judgement but may be said to be a meta-judgement about all judgements. This meta-judgement does not describe about the nature of all judgements but rather prescribes a ruling about the nature of all judgements. Truth, in this connection, is not actually shown to be so intimately related with judgement by means of any analysis of empirical fact. Nor even by analysing the linguistic nature of judgement it is concluded that truth is an intrinsic property of any judgement.

Truth is argued to be intrinsic to judgement by a formulation of prescriptive definition. Nothing can be called in the entire Viśiṣṭādvaita system to be judgement unless it is true or referential in character. A false judgement, from this point of view, is something logically impossible. Rāmānuja, as we have referred earlier, argues in a material mode of speech that if the object of erroneous judgement is totally non-existent then how at all it is apprehended. Formally putting, my knowing something logically entails what I know to be the case. Knowing evidently implies a referent in the formal plane. Thus far the thesis of Rāmānujāites need not be seriously opposed. The contention that all judgements are true in the sense of revealing the object seems to be the direct outcome of taking this verbal use of the term 'know' as paradigm one.

1. A.K. Roy Choudhuri: *Doctrine af Māyā*, Calcutta, 1950, p. 12 and S. Singh: *Vedānta Deśika*, Chowkhamba, 1958, p. 195. These writers conclude that in *Satkhyāti*, the ordinary distinction between truth and error gets obliterated.

But Rāmānujāites are not merely interested in advocating this formal thesis. Had that been such they could have easily been aware of the triviality of such a thesis. They confuse the formal thesis to be a material one by using the material mode of speech all through. A formal argument is confused to be a material one and then as a result of this confusion a metaphysical support is attempted to strengthen the entire reasoning. It, therefore, appears finally evident to us that Rāmānuja's move for the linguistic reformulation of the connotation of the terms like judgement, truth, etc. is though initially started as a programme in the philosophy of language yet finally it points at a revisionary form of metaphysics. The philosopher, here, is moved by an alternative metaphysical picture than by the complex workings of the logical structure of language. This is most probably due to certain misleading analysis of the logical structure of the language.

Truth is argued to be intrinsic to any judgement because it is stipulated that judgement, by definition, reveals or points at something beyond. On all occasions, it is demanded that judgement faithfully describes the referent. There cannot be any judgement without referent. When empirically the corresponding object is not found for a piece of knowledge, a metaphysical speculation is advanced. Applying the doctrine of *pañcīkaraṇa* it is recommended that all judgements truly characterise the referent and hence, in all cases, are true. Neither existentially nor qualitatively a judgement, according to this theory, can be delusive.

Such recommendations do not, in the least, affect the ordinary linguistic distinction between a true judgement and a false judgement. It is advanced just to fit into the general metaphysical view of the philosopher. There is a feeling in some quarters that the theory of *Satkhyāti* speaks about the world. According to this standpoint, *Satkhyāti* leads to the view that world is actually composite of so many apparently inconsistent features or characteristics. Both illusory snake and actual snake are argued to be equally real and objective. But as we have discussed before such apprehension is totally unfounded. The Rāmānujāites are concerned primarily with a logical problem, *viz.*, how can the same referent be judged differently. The

solution that is offered to this problem is precisely to assume that the diverse judgements are not due to diverse referents but are only due to diverse nature of the referent itself. This solution is, no doubt, as we have already indicated metaphysically bent. The discussion of error is started from the standpoint of reality and not from language. It is first stipulated that reality is composed of all things and then subsequently by the help of this stipulation it is further recommended that any judgement whatsoever must refer to such kind of reality. Any judgement, according to this revised metaphysical framework, is argued to be necessarily describing some component part of the reality and hence it is found to be true (*yathārtha*). Nothing is lost in judging since all types of judging are about reality. The reality is stipulated in such a way so that it accommodates all types of descriptions. The view that shell also contains some amount of silver is not formulated on the basis of any scientific discovery but for making an appeal at the conceptual field that language and its descriptions are faithful at all stages so far as reality is to be viewed. Rāmānuja is a metaphysical realist in admitting that descriptions do not falsify reality but actually represent it.

It is, however, true that according to *Satkhyāti* there cannot be complete misdescription or mispredication. What is asserted in any judgement has definitely an objective basis. All attributes are, according to this logical analysis, referentially significant. As has been pointed out before, the different objects of reference are already related in reality and it is only our limited intelligence which takes the ever-related objects as not being related. But this logical analysis is not carried out so much with a view to analyse the structure of the existing language but more predominantly with a motive of revising the existing structure of language to suit certain pre-conceived metaphysical picture.

Even if I have taken *Satkhyāti* to be an appeal for a revision in the conceptual field, it is to be noted however that the discussion of language and its reality is not so well discussed in detail in any works of Rāmānuja or his followers. They have not explicitly analysed the structure of language and then concluded that language can well reveal the reality. They do not

construct the ideal language to show that such ideal language must be taken into consideration for the knowledge of reality (a viewpoint which is most favoured by the recent-day Logical Atomists). The Viśiṣṭādvaitins, here, change the notion of the term 'real'. What is ordinarily called real is revised by them for a metaphysical purpose. Real is defined in such a way (*i.e.*, by the doctrine of *pañcīkaraṇa*) that any judgement of language can well point at it.

In other words, here language is not studied in its actual workings but there is a dogmatic insistence for reviewing the notion of the referent of the judgement to suit the description. It is the notion of this referent of the judgement and not the judgement itself which is first revised. The recommendation is first about the notion of the given. The judgement of error is argued to be equally referential like the judgement of truth because of the metaphysical dogma that ultimate reality (*Brahman*) is qualified (*Saguṇa, Saviśeṣa*, etc.). This dogma, again, may be said to be due to the religious bias that devotee is not fully away from the Lord. But to go into the discussion as to how the devotee is not completely away from the Lord is, I think, beyond the scope of the present work.

2

The Mīmāṁsa Theory of Error

(1) AKHYĀTI

Akhyāti (*Na+Khyāti*) means non-apprehension. The theory, sometimes, is understood as taking error to be objectless or without any objective substratum.[1] Sinha writes that it is not known who exactly propounds such a view of error. Only a Jaina philosopher, Prabhācandra refers and criticises this view in his work.[2] Here the erroneous cognition is interpreted as non-apprehension or non-manifestation due to lack of objective substratum. In a rope-snake erroneous perception, the rope is not apprehended. The so called apprehension of snake is unreal because there is really no snake at all. Therefore, the illusory apprehension is interpreted as actually non-apprehension of the object. If the object were apprehended correctly it would have been apprehended as rope. Since rope is not apprehended, the apprehension of snake is not apprehension at all. It is mere non-apprehension.

It appears that this view of non-apprehension is ultimately based on the fact of non-objectivity or lack of objective substratum (*Nirālambanaṁ*). But even if ordinarily we all believe snake to be illusory and rope to be real in the rope-snake illusion it is to be explained why at all where there is no snake there is the sense of apprehending the snake. Only saying that there is no apprehension because there is no object like snake to be apprehended is perhaps just to avoid the problem of error than to explain it.

1. "*Nirālambanaṁ viparyaya-jñānam*", *Prameya Kamalamārtaṇḍa*, Bombay, 1912.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 286.

However, Akhyātivāda, which is more widely attributed to the Mīmāṁsā school, is not the view mentioned above. I propose to discuss this view more elaborately in the present section.

Akhyāti, here also, is meant non-apprehension. But this non-apprehension is not explained as due to non-objectivity but it is said to be due to non-judging of the discriminative features between two cognitions.[1] The theory of *Akhyāti* is also at times named as *Vivekākhyāti* or *Bhedāgraha* or *Asaṁsargāgraha* or *smṛtipramoṣa*. The theory is primarily advocated by Prabhākara (AD 650-720) and his followers in Mīmāṁsā. It is also said that the early Sāṁkhya view of error remarkably resembles Akhyātivāda.[2]

Prabhākara's view is found in his commentary called *Bṛhatī*[3] on *Śabara bhāṣya*. *Prakaraṇa pañcikā* is another important work of the Prabhākara school which elaborately discusses the doctrine of error. Bhavadeva Miśra's *Nyāya Viveka* along with the commentary of Varadarāja called *Dīpikā* or *Varadarāji* can also be considered in this connection.

Before dealing with the Akhyātivāda perhaps it would not be completely out of place to refer to some of the important views of Prabhākara regarding the nature of knowledge, its validity, etc. for all those issues are well-connected with any discussion of erroneous judgement.

Prabhākara believes in the independent existence of plural number of entities. Knowledge, according to him, is possible only by the presupposition of an external object. There cannot be any cognition without the object since knowledge is always the knowledge of some object. All knowledge is said to be objective. In other words, all types of apprehension (*anubhūti*) are *ipso facto* valid. Memory (*smṛti*) is invalid since the object, in that case, is not directly known but merely recollected or remembered. Valid knowledge is experience and it is something different from memory which is the name of that cognition which arises solely from the impressions left

1. "*Tadevam sati sarvatra samyagagrahaṇam bhramaḥ*"—Prabhākara.
2. *Vide*: Hiriyanna, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
3. *Bṛhatī* is also known as *Nibandhana*.
Vide: *The Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1929, pp. 281-91.

by some previous experience.[1] Memory is regarded to be invalid not because it gives no new knowledge (the view which is accepted by Kumārila) but because it rather depends on a former experience. It does not determine an object independently.[2] From this, it is clear that in Prabhākara's epistemological scheme knowledge is defined in terms of the external given and in no case the knowledge can be wrong. It is something logically impossible (*saṁvid viruddha*) that the object appears otherwise than as it is. To put it in modern terminology, all cognitive expressions are cases of only right judgements. A false judgement is inconceivable. Prabhākara asserts: "It is strange indeed how a cognition can apprehend an object and yet be invalid."[3] Perception is taken as one of the means by which valid knowledge is claimed to have been attained. Since perception is accepted as one of the valid means of knowledge it cannot give rise to some cognition which is invalid. Validity is the very inherent feature of all perceptual cognitions (*svataḥ prāmāṇya*) from this point of view.[4] And in this respect Prabhākara is agreeable to both Kumārila and Rāmānuja. But one thing is important to notice that in Prabhākara we find the definition of valid knowledge to be more wide so as to include both doubtful and erroneous perception within its fold. To him, doubt and error are valid so long as they are apprehensions.[5] At least

1. "*anubhūtiḥ pramāṇam sā smṛteranyā smṛtiḥ punaḥ pūrvavijñānasaṁskāra mātrajam jñānamucyate*", *Prakaraṇa Pañcikā* of Śālikanātha, Chowkhamba Edn., p. 127.
2. Bhatt: *Epistemology of the Bhāṭṭa School of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā*, Chowkhamba Edn., 1962, p. 86.
3. BR, p. 24.
4. It may be noted here that not only knowledge gained through perception but also knowledge gained through other sources like inference, etc., are also regarded to be valid as they all apprehend the object. However, for my purpose here I may limit myself to perceptual apprehensions as the discussion of error is mainly carried on by the illustrations derived from perception.
5. It is doubtful whether doubt can correctly be said as an apprehension since it is a state of oscillation and indecision. Doubt is a process-word whereas knowledge is a product-word. However, this is of no consequence for me since I am, here, exclusively engaged with the question of error.

this is not agreeable to Kumārila even though he accepts the *Svataḥ Prāmāṇyavāda*.[1] This difference between Kumārila and Prabhākara is very significant as by this alone Prabhākara seems to be nearer to Rāmānuja's viewpoint that all apprehension is real.[2] But as it is seen in the previous chapter for maintaining all apprehensions to be real, Rāmānuja takes resort to the metaphysical doctrine of quintuplication. He boldly asserts that the object shell contains some silvery elements and those silvery elements are cognised at the time of illusion. But Prabhākara does not go so far. He, instead of admitting silvery elements in shell, tries to account for error strictly from the epistemological point of view.

According to him the so called erroneous judgement 'This is silver' is not the result of one single cognition (*jñāna*) but is rather a composite of two cognitions. In Rāmānuja, the erroneous judgement 'This is silver' is analysed in terms of the referent. The referent is boldly accepted as silvery in character in spite of the suspicion made from the side of commonsense. But Prabhākara does not find silvery element in the shell. He tries to explain the problem by introducing the two-cognition theory. The ordinarily called erroneous judgement, according to him, is rather a compound having the following two distinct components: THIS is SILVER. The subject

1. As reported by Jayanta, Prabhākaras criticise the Bhāṭṭas for holding *Anyathākhyāti* quite inconsistent to their position of self-validity of knowledge. "It is only fit that these pseudo-mīmāṁsakas are driven far away by the wicked followers of the Nyāya like a heap of Kasa flowers by the wind What credit can be given to the intelligence of those, who not knowing their own *śāstra*, hold the theory that knowledge can misrepresent an object, and in the same breath declare also the self-validity of knowledge " NM, Part I, p. 161.
2. It can be pointed out here that Rāmānuja takes all cognitions (*vijñāna*) to be objective (*yathārtha*) whereas Prabhākara, though takes all apprehensions to be objective, at least excludes memory-cognitions from the field of validity (*pramā*). For Rāmānuja, even memory is valid. However, such subtle difference on the issue of memory does not affect their main views on the nature of knowledge.

of the above judgement 'this' implies the external object of reference or the presented one. That something is presented is undeniable. Even in error something is presented; otherwise how could there be an apprehension! By this it should be noted that Prabhākara tacitly assumes the realistic position, *viz.*, all judgements must have objective reference and hence must be true.[1] He also gives an additional reason for 'this' being referential. 'This' is never negated even after the possible correction. When the erroneous perception is substituted by valid perception, 'this' is not negated but is, rather, retained. One says: "*This* is not silver; *this* is shell."

Ordinarily one may analyse 'This is silver' as a simple judgement. As 'silver' is not actually here, it is commonly held that the identification of silver with 'this' is an instance of misidentification. But Prabhākara, instead of analysing this judgement in the aforesaid manner, suggests that 'silver' is not actually identified as 'this' but rather 'silver' is separately cognised. When one formulates the judgement 'This is silver' he does not perceive silver but simply remembers silver. The act of remembering produces an independent cognition. Memory is a distinct cognition. 'This' is perceived and 'silver' is remembered. But here a question is raised. What exactly is 'this' or *idam*? Is the 'this' actually same or different from the shell which is perceived in the later cognition? Obviously one would say that in fact the same object, shell which is perceived in the later cognition continues to be there during the first cognition. Prabhākara would not dispute the existence of shell during the first cognition. But he argues that even though the shell is there it is not cognised. Shell is not known as shell but as merely 'this'. The 'this' is here meant as apprehending an actually present substance alone (*purovarttidravya mātra grahaṇa*). Now this exactly sounds like wrong cognition as wrong cognition virtually means 'a cognition of a thing as something which is not that thing'.[2]

1. "*Sarvam eva vijñānam samīcīnam*"—Prabhākara.
2. Gangānāth Jhā: *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā*, Indian Press, Allahabad, 1942, p. 81.

But here one may suspect that by admitting wrong cognition Prabhākara is rather inconsistent with his original position which leaves no room for error or invalid cognition. But Prabhākara answers this objection by pointing out that the shell, when presented as 'this', is rather presented in a general form excluding its distinctive features.[1] Shell being presented as 'this' is found to be very much similar to silver. It is not that shell is not apprehended at all and in its place something else is apprehended. Only shell is not fully apprehended. Prabhākara does not go so far as Rāmānuja to suggest that the shell contains partly a silvery element and that element is cognised during erroneous apprehension. He simply asserts that shell being presented as mere 'this' is sufficient to bring the recollection of silver to the mind. Because there are much similarities between shell as 'this' and silver. This is the reason why silver is said to be cognised in the so called erroneous cognition. The represented silver is not distinguished from the presented 'this' because of similarities (*sādṛśyam*). We, according to Prabhākara, are faced with two *jñānas*[2] in the erroneous situation. The 'this' is perceived and the silver is recollected. We only fail to apprehend the discrimination between 'this' and silver. At least the discriminative features which can surely identify the present object as shell are not noticed. So error is due to lack of apprehension.

1. Here the distinctive features mean the specific universal (*sāmānya viśeṣa*) by which shell is apprehended as shell in the fullest sense of the term.
2. Some have translated the term *jñāna* in this connection as psychosis (*e.g.*, Bhatt, *op. cit.*) and thus advance a psychological rendering of the theory. Others indeed take *jñāna* as judgement (*e.g.*, Potter, *op. cit.*). I prefer the term judgement in this connection for a logical analysis of the theory. Hiriyanna approves the term *saṁvit* in preference to *jñāna*, though himself uses the term *jñāna* (*Vide*: *Outlines*, p. 314 footnote). However, *saṁvit* is never clearly distinguished from *jñāna* even by the Mīmāṁsakas (*Vide*: KK, Part II, p. 106). Though some like Śālikanātha insist for maintaining *saṁvit* as directly known and *jñāna* as inferred yet this difference does not in any manner affect Prābhākaras' discussion ou error.

It seems that shell is perceived partly and not wholly during the erroneous cognition. So Prabhākara argues that the perception of 'this' is inadequate or incomplete but definitely not invalid or positively wrong. The other *jñāna*, silver too when is said to be recollective does not mean that it is a complete recollection. Silver when is recollected does not mean that it actually was perceived in the past. Silver is identified with 'this' but not with 'that'. Of course memory as such in Prabhākara's sense is invalid. Because as already pointed out it is dependent on some previous experience (*gṛhitu-grahaṇa-svabhāva*). But during error the silver is not recollected as belonging to some past experience. The judgement 'This is silver' clearly suggests that silver is not fully recollected. Had that been so there would have been no room for confusion. Silver then would not have been identified with 'this'. It is merely half-remembered. Owing to some defect, one part of the nature of remembrance, *viz.*, the consciousness of the object 'having been previously cognised' (*gṛhītatāṁśa*), is obliterated, and only consciousness of the 'cognising part' (*grahaṇāṁśa*) remains. The mere recall of silver without the implication of that pertaining to some past experience[1] is non-differentiated from the perception of 'this'. An object of memory (silver) is identified (*abheda vyavahāra*) with an object of perception (shell) because none of them is cognised fully but only partially. The partial cognition of both the object of memory and that of perception is unified into one total cognition because the distinctive features of the object of memory and that of shell are not cognised.[2] Error, therefore, basically implies non-apprehension and not mis-apprehension. "Illusion or *Viparyaya* may obscure reality so that it is sometimes known only partially, but it cannot be an absolute false knowledge. It is, so to speak, a failure to reveal reality in its entirety, rather than positive error."[3] A

1. This is what is technically called as robbed of its *thatness* (*pramuṣṭatattāksmaraṇa*). *Vide*: Chandradhar Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1964, p. 227.
2. *Vide*: Vācaspati, *Nyāya Vārttika Tātparya-ṭīkā*, Bib. Indi., Cal., 1941, p 74.
3. R. Reyna: *The Concept of Māyā from the Vedas to Twentieth Century*, Asia Publishing House, 1962, p. 78.

positive error, according to Prabhākara, is something logically impossible.

Apart from shell-silver erroneous cognition Prabhākara also discusses the erroneous cognitions where there is no involvement of memory. When a red flower is placed near the white crystal, we have a non-discrimination between two perceptions, *i.e.*, the perception of the white crystal and the perception of a red flower. As such, we take the white crystal to be red. It is here also error is accounted in terms of non-discrimination (*bhedāgraha*). And the same explanation of non-discrimination is consistently maintained by Prabhākara throughout all the different instances of dreams and hallucinations. This shows that Prabhākara accepts non-discrimination as the logical condition of all instances of error.

Now, before explicating the logical structure of the theory of Akhyātivāda, let me examine some of the objections raised against Akhyātivāda as advanced by the rival schools of Indian philosophy. Kumārila and his followers like Sucarita Miśra are the direct critics of Akhyātivāda. They first denounce the theory on the ground that the theory is not a faithful rendering of Śabara's view whom Prabhākara at least claims to have generally followed. Unlike Prabhākara's view that error is due to non-discrimination, Śabara has clearly stated that error consists in a positively false cognition and is due to some defects in the source.[1] But this need not completely undermine Prabhākara's viewpoint. Because the theory of *Akhyāti*, if at all is to be rejected, is to be rejected from some logical ground and not simply due to the fact that it is not approved by a previous authority like Śabara. The theory claims its own independent footing and that itself is to be examined.

It is said that Prabhākara argues for the validity of all cognitions because he adheres to the self-validity theory of knowledge and his acceptance of the theory of self-validity is further associated with his regarding the *Vedas* as valid. One of the main motives for advancing the theory of *Akhyāti* is often said

1. "*Yasya ca druṣṭaṁ karaṇaṁ yatra ca mithyeti pratyayaḥ sa eva samīcīna pratyayaḥ nānyaḥ*"—*Śabara Bhāṣya* on *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā Sūtras*, Madras University Publications, pp. 50-51.

to be presenting the Vedic declarations as unchallengeable and irrefutable. Such a reading about the basis of this theory of error may not be completely without any footing. This might be the case. But such a finding is not philosophically very much significant. While evaluating this theory of error from a philosophical point of view one is required primarily to examine the logical basis that supports such a view.

Pārthasārathi raises an objection saying that non-discrimination is not a necessary condition for error.[1] One may know the difference between north, south, east and west and still be mistaken about which direction he is facing at a particular time. But following Prabhākara one can say that full discrimination is not actually attained before this mistake occurs. There must be some difficulty in understanding the difference between different sides. Once the difficulty is cleared, there is no room for error. Further, it may happen sometime that even if we rectify our errors, they occur again and again. To this, the reply may be given that understanding of the differences does not mean that it must be done in a clear manner for all time. Even if one knows the difference between shell and silver the confusion between the two is not absolutely ruled out. Non-discrimination is very likely to happen due to psychological and other factors. These factors greatly contribute for overshadowing the difference between shell and silver. There is nothing wrong in saying that non-discrimination constitutes error, if truth, on all occasions, stands for discrimination.

Vimuktātman points out that if to Prabhākara all knowledge is self-revealed, then the two judgements, *i.e.*, one derived from memory and the other from perception are to be assumed as self-revealed and by that very reason these judgements need not be non-discriminated and be confused among themselves.[2] That, they are confused with one another, shows that at least here the knowledge is most possibly not fully revealed. But here a point may be raised. At the moment of error there is the awareness of one complex knowledge because of failure to recognise the differentiating characteristics

1. *Śāstra Dīpikā*, translated by D. Venkataramiah, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 89, Baroda Oriental Institute, 1940, p. 73.
2. *Vide*: *Iṣṭa Siddhi*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

among certain elements of that knowledge. The differentiating elements alone are responsible to give rise to the awareness of two independent judgements. It is not that the so called elements of the knowledge are not revealed. Those are revealed in their own ways. Difficulty is not due to the source of revelation. But because of certain other psychological, physical and physiological conditions the distinct elements, though are well revealed, are not discriminated and as the result of that a complex cognition becomes possible. Once such conditions are withdrawn, the full discrimination becomes possible. And after this discrimination is attained, the distinct elements of that complex knowledge which are already revealed as distinct forms of judgements, are accepted as they are. To put it in the language of Prābhākaras, both 'this' as well as 'silver' remain. Nothing is sublated. It is, of course, true that were the two judgements recognised during the time of error as two judgements there would have been no scope for error. But this also does not suggest that the contents of each of these two judgements are not revealed. There is no difficulty with regard to revelation (*prakāśatā*). Since no content of the judgements at issue is ever sublated the self-revelatory character of knowledge is not at all affected. The erroneous cognition as cognition remains, of course, ever revealed. Only its validity is partial to the extent of perceptual component. The perceptive content 'this' is not sublated and thereby it is valid. The memory element 'silver', though invalid, is also not rejected as unreal but is rather put in its proper sphere. The correcting judgement 'This is not silver' does not at all affect the point of revelation. As Hiriyanna says: "The effect of the discovery of error is seen on the reactive side of consciousness – not on its receptive side."[1]

Sometimes it is argued that even if in the erroneous cognition of 'This is silver', 'this' is granted to have been perceived and 'silver' is accepted to have been remembered then why exactly the individual tries to pick up the silver. In other words, how can mere non-discrimination between 'this' and 'silver' impart action on the part of the individual? Many

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 317.

Indian philosophers raise this significant objection against Akhyātivāda.[1]

The Prābhākaras' reply to this objection saying that the very non-apprehension of separateness between two separate cognitions 'this' and 'silver' is sufficient for the operation of corresponding activity. But the opponents of the Prābhākaras particularly the Naiyāyikas further argue that mere non-apprehension of separateness between two cognitions is never a determinate (*niścaya*) state and as such cannot impart activity. Unless the present object is identified as silver or there is the superimposition of the silver-predicate over 'this' error virtually remains unexplained.

But the Prābhākaras seem to have rebutted this objection by placing a counter-objection against the Naiyāyikas. They say that even no positive misidentification can be possible without 'non-apprehension of difference'. "Otherwise it would come about that erroneous cognition might arise in the case of persons who *had* apprehended the difference (which is absurd)."[2]

It appears that the Prābhākaras do not admit a gap between non-discrimination and positive misidentification. Well, what exactly is the difference between non-discrimination between two *jñānas* and positive identity between two *jñānas*? The very non-difference between A and B would mean the identity between A and B.[3] So when according to the Prābhākaras the percept and the memory image is non-differentiated, it is surely the case that both are identified. The dispute between the Prābhākaras and their opponents seems to be mostly centring on a point of terminology alone.

But it should be clearly noted that neither the Prābhākaras nor the opponents clearly see this point. A.K. Roy Choudhuri

1. *Cf*. TC, pp. 486-487, NM, p. 185, BM, p. 28.
2. *Vide*: H.N. Randle: *Indian Logic in the Early Schools*, Oxford: 1930, pp. 72-73.
3. In this connection, a significant remark made by Wittgenstein may be cited: "To say of any *two* things that they are identical is nonsense, and to say of *one* thing that it is identical with itself is to say nothing." *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (5.5303), London, 1951. p. 139.

says "not to have distinguished the two factors is not equivalent, even according to Prabhākara, to perceiving their identity."[1] But this is because by employing the material mode of speech throughout his argument, Prabhākara fails to see that his thesis is not factual but a linguistic one. Akhyātivāda is clearly not factual in the sense of a scientific theory, as in that case, it would have been either established or rejected in view of empirical observation and experiment.

The Akhyātivādins have the *a priori* assumption that all judgements are *ipso facto* true. As it is already pointed out, it is logically inconceivable that a thing is judged as something otherwise than as it is (*saṁvit viruddha*). This *a priori* assumption compels the Akhyātivādins for a readjustment of 'error' in the conceptual field. To put it in other words, what is ordinarily called to be an erroneous judgement must be reinterpreted in view of the *a priori* assumption that judgement, by definition, must be significant both ostensively and descriptively. Even the so called indeterminate knowledge (*nirvikalpaka jñāna*) also, according to Prabhākara, involves class characteristics and is not absolutely non-descriptive.[2]

Hence the ordinarily called erroneous judgement is either to be regarded as a true judgement or no judgement at all. Akhyātivāda chooses the latter alternative and suggests that the erroneous judgement is no judgement at all. In erroneous cognition one does not have, according to Akhyātivāda, one single and self-complete judgement but rather one is faced with two incomplete judgements which are not discriminated. Neither the judgement derived through perception nor the memory-judgement is regarded to be full-fledged judgement. Before these are judged as two separate judgements, these are non-discriminated and the separateness between them is overlooked. Because of this non-discrimination error occurs. The Prābhākaras do not, like the Rāmānujāites, redefine the meaning of the term 'real' so that the real object of reference would include both shelly as well as silvery characteristics. Both shell and silver are taken by the Prābhākaras as two distinct objects

1. *Vide: Self and Falsity in Advaita Vedānta*, p. 244.
2. Gangānātha Jhā, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

of reference. Only it is claimed that during error none of these objects of reference is fully judged. As judgements can never be wrong, the knowledge of silver and that of shell can only be treated as partial judgements. Misjudging is not anything more than non-judging. This reduction of misjudging to the level of non-judging becomes possible since the philosopher is having the *a priori* assumption that knowledge can never be wrong. The so called wrong judgement is interpreted not as a true judgement but as no judgement.

This *a priori* assumption regarding the infallible character of judgement is not reached by adhering to a metaphysical doctrine like that of *pañcikaraṇa* but is rather possible due to epistemological considerations. To know something as what it is not is not knowing it at all. Knowing means what one knows must be the case. So having accepted this criterion the Prābhākaras insist that there cannot be a *mithyā-jñāna* or *viparyaya*. The so called *mithyā-jñāna* has to be interpreted as a case of no *jñāna* (*akhyāti*).

While advocating this reinterpretation of the concept of error, the Prābhākaras like other Indian philosophers very often use certain terms and idioms which are usually taken as psychological. While analysing the concept of error, it is, however, true that these philosophers discuss illusion, hallucination and dream. But it must be admitted that here for analysing the concept of error illusion, etc. are merely referred as illustrations. The philosopher is not here interested either in illusions or in hallucinations or in dreams. His fundamental preoccupation lies in explicating the concept of error in the light of the *a priori* assumption. By reinterpreting the wrong judgement as no judgement the philosopher is not raising a question of psychological interest. He is only confining himself to the fields of epistemology. In this connection the remark of the modern Indian philosophers that Akhyātivāda is a psychological theory is simply to miss the point.[1] Of course it is true that this epistemological theory is based on certain *a priori* assumption which the logic of epistemology

1. *Cf.* A. Bhattacharya, *Studies in Post-Śaṁkara Dialectics*, Calcutta, 1936, p. 273.

does not warrant. Instead of analysing error in the established conceptual framework the Akhyātivādin revises the conceptual scheme in such a manner so that his fundamental assumption that knowledge can never be wrong remains always coherent. But from this let it not be concluded that he is advancing a psychological theory.

The problem of error, to the Prābhākaras, is primarily to account a logical question of determining the exact meaning of the concept of error. That error is due to the confusion between two distincts is nothing but an attempt for logically defining the concept of error. This attempt shows whether error occurs due to this or that source is of no consideration here. So long the theory of *Akhyāti* emphasizes only this logical point there seems to be no scope for disagreement. But the difficulty starts while giving undue emphasis on the example of erroneous perception than on error itself, the Prābhākaras become victim to certain uncritical assumptions. They first assume that the erroneous cognition '*Idam rajatam*' consists of two independent judgements, though incomplete ones. *Idam* partially describes the existent object, *i.e.*, shell and hence is a perceptual judgement. *Rajatam* partially describes the previously perceived object, *i.e.*, silver and hence it is a memory-judgement. Both these assumptions can be challenged.

This or *idam* is not a descriptive term so that it describes the present object, shell. *Idam* being a demonstrative pronoun, has only referential significance in the language.[1] *Idam* neither describes the present object completely nor even it describes the object partly. And since *idam* is absolutely non-descriptive, the question of truth or falsity of it becomes simply irrelevant. The Prābhākaras, so far as *idam* is concerned, insist for a valid judgemental status because according to them *idam* is not negated in the subsequent correcting judgement '*This* is not silver, *this* is shell'. But such an argument is only due to the misunderstanding of the logical behaviour of different linguistic expressions. *This* continues in the correcting judge-

1. For a logical distinction between descriptive and demonstrative terms *Vide*: L.S. Stebbing, *A Modern Introduction to Logic*, New York, 1961, pp. 25-27.

ment only to serve the purpose of reference. Being a referent 'this' is merely a formal assumption for all significant discourse.

Again, *rajatam* is argued to be an instance of memory-judgement in so far as it suggests the description of silver. Of course, it is also maintained that this memory does not clearly indicate that the description of silver points to the silver actually perceived in the past. As it has been noticed before, it is argued that owing to some defect one part of the nature of remembrance, *viz.*, the consciousness of the object having been previously cognised, is obliterated, and only consciousness of the 'cognising part' remains. To put this distinction more clearly, it may be said that the judgement at issue is a recollected one in so far as it brings out only the universal characteristics of silver excluding its particular characteristics which include its spatio-temporal location. The universal characteristics of silver and the universal characteristics of shell (*i.e.*, the present object) are not properly discriminated. Now if it is held that in error only the universal characteristics of silver are remembered then one can equally point out that this sort of memory also plays its own role in the case of any non-erroneous judgement. For instance even in the case of valid perceptual judgement while the shell is rightly judged as shell then also, unless the universal characteristics are taken into consideration and are applied over the given, it cannot even be identified as shell. Nobody can, however, apply the name 'shell' to some object unless he has the previous idea about the said term's use and application. This sort of conceptualisation and classification do involve memory and no judgement is actually free from this involvement of memory. Hence there seems to be no point in distinguishing *rajatam* as a separate memory-judgement only from the ground as adduced above.

To Prabhākara, misapprehension is something logically impossible. This is because the term 'apprehension' seems to be understood more in terms of objective revelation or manifestation. Here the philosopher seems to be drawing our attention to the point that a thing must have its own form

of manifestation to be manifested. It cannot be manifested in a form different from what it is. As Sinha puts it, 'whatever is manifested to consciousness must be the object of that consciousness; and hence there can be no apprehension of an object as a different thing.'[1] But this does not prove anything significant except reiterating that object manifested in a piece of cognition must be the object of that cognition. In this sense, it is perfectly true that an object cannot appear anything other than what it is. But objects appearing is one thing and our knowing the object in the sense of judging it is quite another thing. While knowing, it is quite conceivable that we may misjudge or may have a deceptive knowledge-claim about the object even if the object appears in its own form. Prabhākara's point that the object cannot be apprehended differently if it is manifested or revealed in its own form carries no conviction.

(2) VIPARĪTAKHYĀTI

Both Prabhākara and Kumārila, though are in agreement with each other in regard to the self-validity of knowledge, yet advance opposite views with regard to error. The view of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and his followers is known as Viparītakhyātivāda.[2]

Various later commentators and philosophers have not discussed this theory of error and assimilate this to the theory of *Anyathākhyāti* which is held by the Naiyāyikas. Even some have gone on to suggest *Anyathākhyāti* to be the view of the Bhāṭṭas.[3] Pārthasārathi (about 9th century A.D.), a great defender of Kumārila's view, has stated that in all cases of error it is only the relation between the subject and the predicate elements, *e.g.*, the 'this' and the 'silver', which is unreal and appears to be real. The relata, however, are always real.[4] But

1. *Op. cit.*, Calcutta Edn., 1958, p. 299.
2. Hiriyanna finds much similarity between this Bhāṭṭa account of error and that of the later Sāṁkhya which is known as Sadasatkhyātivāda. *Vide*: *op. cit.*, p. 292
3. Mahadevan: *op. cit.*, p. 101.
4. "*sarvatra saṁsargamātraṁ asat ababhāsate saṁsarginastu santa eva; viparītakhyātirityucyate mīmāṁsakeḥ*"—*Śāstra Dīpikā*, Nirnaya Sagar Edn , p. 58.

the Bhāṭṭas, it is said, do not recognise what is known as *alaukika pratyakṣa* which is seen in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika explanation of error.[1] Now whether this acceptance of *alaukika pratyakṣa* is essential to the Naiyāyika account of error will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

"*Viparīta*" means "contrary" or "opposite" and as such *Viparītakhyāti* may mean that the judgement, instead of judging the referent as it is, judges it in an opposite manner. According to it, in error, there is though always a reference to the referent yet the way in which the referent is described is rather a case of misdescription. Error, in other words, is a wrong judgement where there is application of a wrong predicate to the referent. Though the said predicate has legitimate application in some other sphere, in the present context it is surely a misfit being opposite to the very nature of the given. To put it in the language of perception, in error there is the apprehension of a real object in an opposite form which though not real in the present context yet is not absolutely unreal.[2]

The original exponent of this theory of error is Kumārila (AD 620-700) whose views are found in his *Śloka Vārttika*, a commentary on the *tarka pāda* section of *Śabara Bhāṣya*. The earliest extant commentary on *Śloka Vārttika* is *Tātparyaṭīkā* by Umbeka. Next commentary is *Kāṣika* by Sucaritamiśra. Pārthasārathi, the famous author of *Śāstra Dīpikā* also discusses the Mīmāṁsā view on error elaborately in his commentary, *Nyāyaratnākara*. My discussion of the theory of *Viparītakhyāti* is mainly dependent on these sources.

Kumārila, like Prabhākara and Rāmānuja, believes in the objective character of knowledge. Knowledge, in the sense of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*),[3] is the determination of the external

1. Hiriyanna: *op. cit.*, p. 316.
2. "*tatra śuktikā rajata ādi jñānaṁ śuktirabyam bhāvaṁ śuktikārūpeṇa sadrūpaṁ bhāvāntarasya rajatsye yat sadrūpaṁ rajatarūpaṁ tena rūpeṇa gṛhṇad bhrāntaṁ bhavati*"—Pārthasārathi: *Nyāyaratnākara*, Chowkhamba Edn., Nirālambana, p. 117.
3. Usually the term "*pramāṇa*" stands as the instrument of valid knowledge. But Kumārila and his commentators have used it for valid knowledge (*Vide*: Bhatt, *op. cit.*, p. 73) in the context of *Viparītakhyāti*. I, therefore, adopt Kumārila's usage.

object. The difference between these philosophers primarily rests on the point that while for Rāmānuja all cognitions including memory are valid and for Prabhākara all cognitions excluding memory are valid, Kumārila recognises the invalid cognition which does not determine the referent as it is but as opposite to what it is. But again, Kumārila like both Rāmānuja and Prabhākara admits the self-validity theory of knowledge. Here the question is raised, if knowledge is self-valid, where is the scope for invalidity?

This point needs elaboration. Because it is mainly on this point, the Bhāṭṭas are criticised severely both by the classical opponents as well as by the modern exponents of Indian philosophy.

Kumārila defines valid knowledge as definite or determinate cognition of objects, which does not stand in need of confirmation by other cognitions.[1] From this it appears that a piece of cognition, in order to be valid, is not only a firm or true determination of object but also must be absolutely new. That means both unerring and newness are taken as the criteria of validity. Once this is accepted it can easily be seen that such cognitions like *bhrama* and *smṛti* are nothing but invalid. The Bhāṭṭas, however, talk also in this connection of *ajñāna, saṁśaya* and *samvāda* as forms of invalid cognition in addition to the first two. All this shows that in the Bhāṭṭa scheme there is the presence of invalid cognition along with valid cognition.

But if validity is something intrinsic to the very nature of knowledge how at all invalidity occurs? Kumārila insists that if validity is not inherent in all knowledges, it could not be produced by any extraneous condition.[2] But in that case, what is about error? The Bhāṭṭas try to meet the difficulty by interpreting the valid cognitions to be possible due to valid sources like perception, inference, etc. while the so called invalid cognitions are regarded to be false because they are not strictly derived from any of the valid sources. Here one may point

1. "*tasmāt drudham yadut-pannam nāpi samvādamrucchati jñānāntareṇa vijñānam tat pramāṇam pratīyatām*", SV. 2.80.
2. "*svataḥ sarva-pramāṇānām prāmāṇyam iti gamyatām, na hi svato satī śaktiḥ kartum anyena śakyate*", SV, 2.47.

out that the illusory cognition of shell as silver is surely derived from perception, though a wrong one. If one admits this, then from Kumārila's point of view at least this cognition be regarded as valid even if ordinarily it is regarded to be illusory.

Kumārila is aware of this difficulty. While commenting on the *Mīmāṁsā Sūtra* (fourth aphorism) which contains a definition of direct knowledge (*pratyakṣa*),[1] he interprets the definition by saying that knowledge, obtained by a perception, is the result of the right functioning of the sense-organs with reference to their objects.[2] In other words, the so called erroneous cognition is due to the wrong functioning of sense-organs with reference to their object. That is why, though in such cognition, there is the presentation of object it is not as such known; it is rather known as something other than what it is. In this manner the so called erroneous cognition is, by definition, declared to be non-perceptual.

All this shows that Kumārila definitely distinguishes between terms like cognition and knowledge even though sometimes he uses the same term *jñāna* both in the sense of cognition and knowledge. *Jñāna* in the sense of cognition includes, however, both valid and invalid cognitions. The valid cognition, being the case of a true judgement is said as knowledge. Knowledge is defined in Kumārila's philosophy to be necessarily true and new and is always derived from the valid sources like perception, etc. That is why it is specifically called as *pramāṇa*. A *pramāṇa* being false or invalid is something logically inconceivable according to Kumārila. The invalid cognition, on the other hand, being false is necessarily excluded from the field of knowledge. It is never derived from the valid sources but is rather possible because of certain defects in the source itself. It is, therefore, designated as *apramā* or false judgement where the judgement describes the referent not in the appropriate manner but in an opposite manner. The question of validity is not raised in connection with this false judgement, as it is wrong from its very origin. Of course it is conceded that the

1. "*sat-saṁprayoge, puruṣasyendriyāṇām buddhi-janma tat pratyakṣam animittam vidyamānopalambhanatvād iti*" —*Mīmāṁsā Sūtra*, I.I.4.
2. SV, 38-39.

erroneous character of the invalid cognition is not revealed from its very origin; it is only subsequently revealed to be invalid when it is sublated by a right judgement (*Bādhaka jñāna*).

Hence, when Kumārila propounds the *Svataḥ Prāmāṇyavāda*, it should be construed that it is only knowledge in the sense of right judgement which is true or valid by necessity. Knowledge, being true by definition, can never be false. The issue of truth or validity is only significantly linked with a *pramāṇa* and not with any form of cognition (*jñāna*). So it is not the same cognition which is intrinsically valid becomes subsequently invalid. The apparent inconsistency in Kumārila's philosophy can thus be avoided once one distinguishes knowledge from cognition in the aforesaid manner.

It is, as already pointed out, accepted by Kumārila that the invalidity of the invalid cognition is not self-revealed. Because both invalid as well as valid cognitions necessarily refer the referent. So far as the referent is concerned there is no distinction admitted between these two types of cognitions. This is why the so called cognition is not revealed to be invalid all at once. Besides referring the referent, the invalid cognition also has a claim of describing the referent in the appropriate manner. And till this claim for appropriately describing the referent is not challenged or falsified from some outer source, *i.e.*, by means of a right judgement, the erroneous character of the said wrong judgement is not recognised. In the wrong judgement, though there is a point of reference, the referent is not characterised as it is but as something other than what it is. It is this distinguishing mark which distinguishes the false judgement from the true one.

It is generally remarked that the Bhāṭṭa theory of intrinsic validity is based on psychological sense of conviction.[1] But, as has been discussed above, knowledge is said by Kumārila to be true not in any psychological sense but purely from a logical point of view. It is not that knowledge is true because there is a strong sense of conviction in it. But it is rather due to the fact that knowledge, by definition, can never be false. Knowledge in the logical plane implies truth. That

1. *Cf.* Bhatt, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

knowledge in so far as it is knowledge, can never be false, is, however, linguistically true. It is indeed self-contradictory to say that I know P and yet not P. Knowledge is intrinsically true because truth logically follows from the very meaning rules of 'knowledge'. It is, therefore, not from the point of psychological certainty that knowledge is said to be true but because of its conforming to the logical point that knowledge, as knowledge, is necessarily true.

Some have gone on to conclude that the main motive which led both Prābhākaras and Bhāṭṭas to adopt the theory of intrinsic validity is to seek a theoretical justification for their belief in the supremacy of the *Vedas*.[1] This remark, even if it is true, certainly darkens the logical significance of the theory and thus reduces it to the branch of theology.

Now even if knowledge implies validity in such logical sense yet as a matter of fact manything one may claim to have known yet it does not at all follow that what one claims to know is really so. My claiming to have known P does not as a matter of fact imply P. The theory of *Svataḥ Prāmāṇya* can be accepted only in the tautological sense. It appears that the Bhāṭṭas who advocate this theory by emphasizing the point that knowledge as knowledge must be regarded as true, are only referring (in an imprecise language, of course) to this linguistic character of valid knowledge. Again when they refer to the fact of cognition being invalidated by subsequent experience, they only refer to the rejection of certain truth-claim as a matter of fact. In the invalid cognition there is at first the claim for its truth or validity though later on, this claim for truth is withdrawn by the subsequent verification.

If this is accepted then it may seem clear that the theory of self-validity and invalid cognition is not advanced from the same point of view but from different points of view. The credit may be given to the Bhāṭṭas for clearly distinguishing the two usages of the term *jñāna*. The self-validity of knowledge, while is maintained from the linguistic point of view, the adm ission of invalid cognition is justified from the factual

1. *Cf.* D.N. Sastri: *Critique of Indian Realism*, Agra University, 1964 p. 479.

point of view. However, it is true that neither Kumārila nor even his followers are able to clearly show this logical distinction because the language in which their arguments are advanced is found to be highly vague. That is the reason why very often both the admirers as well as the critics of the Bhāṭṭa school think that the Bhāṭṭa account of validity is inconsistent with its account of error.

Now apart from the theory of self-validity the Bhāṭṭa account of error is examined at the background of realism. It is very often remarked that the realistic position of the Bhāṭṭas in general is inconsistent with their account of error.[1] As realists they have got to admit the objective character of all knowledge. But the very fact of error poses a great problem for such objectivity. If the relation (*saṁsarga*) is declared to be unobjective then to that extent at least the theory falls short of realism. Rāmānuja bluntly accepts the objectivity of all error. Prabhākara refuses to call anything as positive error.

Kumārila says that in error one thing is known as something contrary to itself. To put it in other form, one is confused with the other. There is a creation of false relation between one with the other. By identifying the distinct reals into one, error is possible. In the previous section, while dealing with Akhyātivāda, it has been marked that to the Prābhākaras error consists not of one unitary judgement but it is the composite of two separate (though incomplete) judgements represented by the 'this' and the 'silver'. The discussion of error is carried by separate analysis of each of those incomplete judgements. Kumārila does not take this analysis to be correct. According to him the erroneous judgement 'This is silver' is only one single judgement of whose 'this' and 'silver' are just two parts. This judgement is an instance of wrong judgement. There is no need for Kumārila to bring out two types of judgements like that of perception and of memory into the discussion of error.

'This' in the judgement 'This is silver' is only regarded by Kumārila to be the subject (*viṣaya*) and 'silver' is taken as the predicate (*prakāra*). Both the subject and the predicate are

1. Hiriyanna, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

accepted as real. The subject functions like a logical subject which is free from all kinds of characterisations. It is, in the language of Kumārila, only *Śuddha-viṣaya.* No judgement can be formulated without the referent and in this sense 'this' or the subject is undeniable. It is, from this point of view, argued that 'this' is continuously used both in the erroneous as well as in the non-erroneous judgement. 'This' is taken as real not in the sense of a metaphysical entity. 'This' only functions as a formal assumption for all significant discourse.

'Silver' too, in the erroneous judgement, is accepted by Kumārila to be real. It is real in the sense that the predicate of silverhood is in itself a genuine one. It is not that silver is nowhere used as a predicate. As a predicate it has legitimate application. Predicate in itself is not faulty. It is only when a predicate is misapplied to a subject, error results. A wrong or invalid judgement is not due to predicate but due to *predication.* That is why in the language of Kumārila and his followers it is maintained that error is not due to relata, *i.e.*, the subject and the predicate but only due to the relation (*saṁsarga*) which misrelates the predicate to the subject.

The subject is mispredicated. The silver-description does not apply to the present referent. Error results when the appropriate predicate is not applied and in lieu of that an opposite predicate is applied. Hence it is said that the erroneous judgement is nothing but a contrary judgement (*viparīta-khyāti*). To judge a thing as what it is not is to commit error.[1] Thus far the Bhāṭṭas are only engaged in defining the concept of error. The issue that is raised, in this regard, is only logical and never ontological.

The Bhaṭṭas are only analysing here the erroneous judgement into two parts, *viz.*, subject and predicate and not, as Hiriyanna interprets "the object of erroneous knowledge into two parts—the 'this' (*viṣaya*) and the 'what' (*prakāra*)."[2] The analysis of error which is consistently made in the judgemental level from a logical point of view is mistakenly thought to be

1. "*atasmiṁs tad-iti pratyayo viparyayaḥ*"—*Praśastapāda-bhāṣya* with *Nyāya-kandalī*, Banaras, 1895, p. 177.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 315.

of ontological significance. The reality of 'this' and 'silver' is not maintained from metaphysical but from purely epistemological point of view. Thus that the Bhāṭṭas are not true to the spirit of realism is just to read unnecessarily ontologism in a sphere of discussion that is exclusively confined to logic and epistemology. From the standpoint of logic and epistemology nothing is violated if relation is asserted as unreal (*asat*).

So far as this logical analysis of error is pursued by the Bhāṭṭas, their view does not seem to be different from that of the Naiyāyikas. Like '*viparīta*', '*anyathā*' too, as it will be discussed in the next chapter, implies only a formal condition and is, in no case, guided by any sort of pre-conceived ontology.

However, this logical approach to the problem of error which is undoubtedly the starting as well as the significant point for the Bhāṭṭas could not be long carried on. Very soon this logical analysis initiated in the writings of Kumārila got mixed up with certain psychological considerations. Instead of confining themselves to the logical analysis of the concept of error, the Bhāṭṭas, rather unwittingly, put more emphasis on the nature and the cause of erroneous perception. Thus the logical problem 'What is error?' becomes mixed up with the question 'How is erroneous perception possible?'

It is because of giving this undue emphasis on the example of erroneous perception than on error itself, the Bhāṭṭas like the Prābhākaras become victim to certain uncritical assumptions. Though they do not agree with the Prābhākaras in analysing the erroneous cognition in terms of two incomplete judgements, yet the manner, in which they very often elucidate the nature of both the parts of erroneous cognition, *viz.*, the presentative and representative factors, suggests that they have confused a logical issue with that of psychology.

This or *viṣaya*, though is actually meant as a logical subject in the context of the analysis of error, is very often presented in the writings of the Bhāṭṭas to be a perceptual datum. This is primarily because the Bhāṭṭas, while discussing the concept of error, confine themselves too rigidly to the illustration of shell-silver which belongs to sense-perception. And for this

reason 'this' is misleadingly taken as belonging to shell and as shell continues to be empirically existing, 'this' also is thought to be empirically existing. But such an account, as has been discussed here, is simply unwarranted. 'This' continues in the subsequent non-erroneous judgement only as a referent and as such there can be no descriptive significance of 'this'. 'This' is therefore not empirical but carries significance only from the formal point of view. Such a confusion results mainly because of the adoption of the material mode of speech. Modern writers too fail to notice this confusion and as the result of which the highly significant logical theory of error, presented by Kumārila, is taken to be an empirical theory. Psychologism is introduced where it has no relevance.

Again 'silver' instead of being strictly analysed as a logical predicate (*prakāra*) is very often treated as a memory-image. It does not make any point to say that 'silver' as a memory-image is real. All that the Bhāṭṭas here are groping to suggest is that the silver-predication is not absolutely inapplicable. It has surely application, though in a different context. It is this talk of memory-image which completely shadows the logical point.

3

The Nyāya Theory of Error

The theory of *Anyathākhyāti*, though, is widely known to to be the doctrine held by the Naiyāyikas, yet is often said to be acceptable to some Jainas, and some Mīmāṁsakas.[1] Dr Dasgupta refers to an account of Jaina theory of error which he names as *Satkhyāti*; but the explanation of the said doctrine as given by Dr Dasgupta very closely resembles the theory of *Anyathākhyāti*.[2] The later Sāṁkhya theory of *Sadasatkhyāti* is very often (as pointed out earlier) compared with *Viparītakhyāti*. The Naiyāyika authority like Udayana does not distinguish between *Viparītakhyāti* and *Anyathākhyāti*.[3] But as we have mentioned in the previous chapter, there are some who distinguish these two theories of error.

The Nyāya account of error has been expounded by a galaxy of thinkers beginning from Gotama (about 3rd century BC). Of course, Gotama has not explicitly mentioned the term '*Anyathākhyāti*' anywhere in his *sūtra*. But there are references about wrong judgements.[4] His *sūtras* are commented by Vātsyāyana (AD 300). Uddyotakara (AD 635) defends Vātsyāyana-bhāṣya in his *Vārttika*. Both of them, however, discuss and differentiate wrong judgements from the right ones in detail. The term '*Anyathākhyāti*' perhaps first occurs in Vācaspati's *Nyāya-Vārttika-Tātparyaṭīkā*, a gloss on Uddyotakara's *Vārttika*. *Tātparyaṭīkā* of Vācaspati is again comment-

1. Dr Sinha refers *Anyathākhyāti* to be the view supported by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, the Bhāṭṭas, the Yogas and the Jainas.—*op. cit.*, p. 285.
2. *Op. cit.*, p. 183.
3. *Vide*: *Ātmatattvaviveka*, Bibliotheca Indica Edn., pp. 662-63.
4. *Vide*: NS, IV.II.35, 36 and 37.

ed by Udayanācārya (about 10th century AD) in his *Tātparyapariśuddhi*. "Tradition ascribes to Udayanācārya the first conception of the idea of uniting the two sister systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika into one harmonious whole."[1] However, the first known work which elaborately combines the two systems is *Saptapadārthī* of Śivāditya Miśra which is again followed by similar works—Keśab Miśra's *Tarka-Bhāṣā*, Annaṁbhaṭṭa's *Tarka-Saṁgraha*, etc. All these works, more or less, adhere to the classical account of *Anyathākhyāti*. A departure to the classical account of error and knowledge comes from Gaṅgeśa (about 1200 AD), the author of *Tattva-Cintāmaṇi* and the founder of Navya-Nyāya school. There are many followers and commentators of Gaṅgeśa headed by Raghunātha Tarka-Śiromaṇi (writer of *Dīdhiti*).

It is not my purpose here to list all the writers of the old and the new schools of Nyāya. I have mentioned only those writers who have discussed error more elaborately than the rest. In course of my discussion of the Nyāya theory of error I will, however, emphasize the views of those classical Naiyāyikas with regard to the explanation of error.

Before analysing the Naiyāyika explanation of error it would not be improper to refer the Nyāya account of knowledge, truth and such other allied concepts. 'Knowledge' is understood in a very wide sense in the Nyāya philosophy. Gotama does not find any difference between *buddhi*, *upalabdhi*, and *jñāna*.[2] This line of Gotama suggests that knowledge stands for any conscious determinate state and not necessarily referring to correct awareness alone. *Buddhi* here is used in the sense of determination (*niścaya*). Later on, the Naiyāyikas elaborate the view of Gotama by pointing out that *jñāna* or *buddhi* is the cause of all verbal expressions (*sarvavyavahāra-hetuḥ*).[3] The invariable association of *jñāna* and *vyavahāra*

1. *Vide*: Introduction of Mahadev Rajaram Bodas to TS, p. XLIII.
2. *Buddhirupalabdhirjñānamityanarthāntaram*, NS, I.1.15.
3. TS, Sec. 34. The traslantion of *vyavahāra* as verbal expression is borrowed from S. Kuppuswamy Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 104. It may be noted that *vyavahāra* here does not conform to its literal meaning as referring to any behaviour that is conducive to practical interest of life. It, as prompted by *buddhi* that includes determination,

shows that all knowledge must be expressible in forms of determinate judgement. It is the conceptualised judgement which is of interest for the Naiyāyikas.

Some object to this rendering of the term knowledge as it thereby excludes what is taken as non-conceptualised knowledge (*nirvikalpaka jñāna*). But the status of this non-conceptualised knowledge is not accepted as an independent form of knowledge anywhere in Nyāya philosophy. Neither Gotama, nor Vātsyāyana, nor even Uddyotakara, refers to this kind of knowledge. Only Vācaspati traces this distinction between *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpaka jñāna* in his *Tātparyaṭīkā* by interpreting the two words *avyapadeśyam* and *vyavasāyātmakam* contained in the *Sūtra* (I.I.4) to mean respectively *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka* perceptions. But even here we find *nirvikalpaka* not as an independent form of *jnāna*, rather it is only logically assumed as an earlier stage before *savikalpaka* form of perception. *Nirvikalpaka* is only the ground of the *savikalpaka* knowledge of a thing. The non-conceptualised stage is not a matter of perception or of direct awareness.[1] To later Naiyāyikas, therefore, *nirvikalpaka jñāna* "is neither *pratyakṣa* nor *anumiti* nor any other kind of *anubhava*, and can hardly come under *buddhi* itself, as it gives rise to no *vyavahāra*. It can be neither *pramā* nor *apramā*, for as it has no *prakāratā* neither the definition *tadvati tat prakārakatvaṁ* nor *atadvati tatprakārakatvaṁ* applies to it."[2]

All this shows that the Nyāya is not committed to accept a non-conceptualised form of knowledge. Knowledge of all

refers only to such conscious, voluntary actions that are communicable by means of language. Hence in Nyāya, *buddhi* or *jñāna* stands for any state of conceptualised judgement.

1. Viśvanātha Pañcānana: *Siddhānta Muktāvalī* "*Nirvikalpakam na pratyakṣaṁ . . . vaiśiṣṭyānavagāhijñānasya pratyakṣaṁ*", Nirnaya Sagara Edn., p. 58.
2. Y.B. Athalye: notes on TS, pp. 218-219. Viśvanātha, in his *Bhāṣā Paricchеda*, makes a similar comment, "non-conceptualised knowledge is neither valid nor erroneous" (*na pramā nāpi bhramaḥ syān nirvikalpakaṁ*—St. 135). *Vide*: also TC, "Non-conceptualised knowledge being beyond validity and invalidity, is rather pratically useless" (*nirvikalpakañca pramāpramābahirbhūtameva, vyavahārāṇāṁgatvāt*)—*Pratyakṣa khaṇḍa*, p. 402.

varieties, according to this system, is bound to be conceptual. The *avyapadeśya* (non-verbal) is only assumed as a necessary postulate in the system upon which the proper knowledge structure is built.

This conceptualised knowledge (*sarvavyavahāra jñāna*) is classified into two types, *viz.*, representational (*smṛti*) and presentational (*anubhava*). The representational form of knowledge is also known as memory, where something is not directly known but rather is recollected out of previous experience. It refers to the knowledge of the past. As such, the knowledge does not become new but only is repetitive. *Smṛti* is caused due to the impressions of the past.[1] The memory-judgement is not referring to a given datum.

Anubhava is said to be just opposite to *smṛti*.[2] While memory-judgement is representational this judgement is said to be presentational. Here the judgement is meant for referring to the directly presented object. *Anubhava* is often translated as experience[3] or apprehension.[4] But both the translations appear to be misleading. *Anubhava* cannot be experience since according to western tradition experience is taken as sense-originated whereas in the Nyāya context it admits not only sense perception (*pratyakṣa*) but also inference (*anumāna*), analogy (*upamāna*) and language (*śabda*) as its source. It also cannot be apprehension, as in that case it would not be much different from *upalabdhi* which is, in the Nyāya classification, taken to be the genus of *anubhava*. I, therefore, take it to be presentational judgement where the presentational character is the distinguishing mark.[5] Knowledge, in the Nyāya context, as I have argued before, is bound to be conceptualised or judgemental. In that way, I have excluded the so called non-conceptualised (*nirvikalpaka*) knowledge. The knowledge is presentational in so far as the judgement refers to the object, directly presented. It is precisely here

1. "*Saṁskāra mātra janyam jñānaṁ smṛtiḥ*"—TS, Sec. 34.
2. TS, Sec. 34.
3. *Vide*: Kuppuswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 112 and B.L. Atreya: *The Elements of Indian Logic*, Moradabad, 1962, p. 36.
4. *Vide*: TS, p. 173.
5. "*Tattvamanāropitaṁ rūpam, tasya jñānamanubhavaḥ*"—SP, Sec. 64.

where the question of truth (*pramā*) and falsity (*apramā*) is raised. When the judgement describes the referent as it is, it is true. True judgement (*yathārtha jñāna*) stands for judging the referent in that form of attributes which actually belong to it. False judgement (*ayathārtha jñāna*) is the judging of a referent in some form of attributes other than those which actually belong to it. Erroneous judgement is said as 'judging something what it is not' (*atasmiṁs tad iti jñānam*).[1]

While analysing error it is never maintained by the Naiyāyikas that the referent asserted in a wrong judgement is absolutely missed and that the judgement fails to hook itself on to its referent. *That* which is judged as silver can never be denied. It is only the wrong judgement of *that* as *what* (*viz.*, silver) which is later on rectified but not the *that* itself. This means that according to Nyāya, the wrong judgement is not possible bereft of referentiality. It must have a referent. My judging something to be different from what it is, is surely wrong. But this does not affect the referent of the judgement. It only shows that error is due to the descriptive part of the judgement. Vātsyāyana says that in case of every false judgement there is some sort of real referent and no false judgement is completely bereft of a locus.[2] Uddyotakara similarly remarks that 'the *referent* all the while remains what it actually is'.[3] There is the standing assumption that all judgements, whether true or false, are referential. *Buddhi* is that which reveals the given in the characterised form.[4] False judgement is false only because it judges something as what it is not.

'This is not silver; this is shell' does not mean that silver-characteristic is completely rejected as obsolete. Only the attribution of silver-characteristic over the present referent is denied. But the silver-characteristic as being applied to a different referent is not denied. The silver-characteristic has an application, though in a different context. When the wrong judgement is corrected it does not mean that the phrase 'being silver'

1. NV, p. 26.I.4.
2. Vātsyāyana bhāṣya on NS, iv.II.35.
3. Quoted by C.D. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 229, underlining mine.
4. *Arthaprakāśo buddih*, TK, p. 26.

is non-significant or it has no application. It only shows that it is applied in a context where it is not to be applied at all. Here the significant similarity between the Nyāya account of error with that of the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṁsakas may be noted. To put it in other words, error is due to only false attribution or mis-characterisation (*āropa*) but not due to lack of non-referentiality (*artha-śūnyatā*). It can be well marked that this view of error is quite consistent with the Nyāya view of negation (*abhāva*) which stands not for complete absence but for the negation of something in something else. Error 'is a false judgement of the *that* through the *predication* of such characters' which do not belong to it (*viparīta-dharmādhyāropeṇa*).[1]

In a true judgement like 'This is silver' (*idaṁ rajataṁ*), where the this is correctly known as silver it is argued that the objective content of knowledge exactly corresponds to the external realities which include the attribute 'silveriness', the thing possessing that attribute and their relation of inherence (*samavāya*).[2] But in a false judgement like 'This is silver', where shell is mistaken for silver, the objective content of knowledge does not exactly correspond to the external realities represented by the this, silveriness and their relation. In other words, in cases of wrong judgement (*mithyā-polabdhi*) the this is known as something otherwise. This is what is known as *Anyathākhyāti*. Here in case of cognising shell as silver the universal, 'silveriness' "is referred not to its own *referent* but to a different *one*".[3] To put it in other words, error is not due to referent but due to mis-attribution or false characterisation. The silveriness is wrongly predicated to the present referent, *i.e.*, shell. Error introduces or attributes (*adhyāropa*) a foreign characteristic which does not actually belong to the referent. This means that error, according to Nyāya, is a case of mis-judging or mispredication.[4]

1. S.C. Chatterjee: *The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge*, Calcutta, p. 33, underlining mine.
2. It may be noted in this connection that Nyāya takes the thing that is known as a composite of substance, attribute and their relation (*viṣaya viṣayibhāva*).
3. S.C. Chatterjee, *ibid.*, underlining mine.
4. "*Sarvam jñānaṁ dharmiṇya-bhrāntam, prakāre tu viparyayaḥ*"—SP, p. 25.

Thus far the account of error as advocated by Nyāya seems to be hardly disputable. The logical point that one is to admit in case of error is to say that error is judging something as what it is not. Even such radical realists like Rāmānujāites would also agree to this point. Because even if the silver is argued by them to be objective and constituting a part of the given real yet error arises in so far as a silvery part is judged to be the whole which is definitely more than silvery. In fact, as already discussed, Rāmānuja himself accepts the point that all accounts of error must admit one thing appearing as another.[1] But here it can be pointed out that Rāmānuja and his followers, while admitting this logical point at the initial level of their discussion, seem to have extended the discussion of error from the formal plane to the metaphysical plane. In other words, the logical problem of error is misleadingly tackled in terms of metaphysics. The formalists like Naiyāyikas, while restrict the discussion of error only to the sphere of judgement, appear to have discussed the issue from a strict metalinguistic level without any ontological commitment. The Rāmānujāites, on the other hand, because of their involvement with metaphysics are led to speculate that there is unity in nature. All things share in all things and contain common characteristics. It is this belief in *pañcīkaraṇa* which led them to explain away the problem of error by maintaining that error is as much real as truth. The distinction between truth and error seems to be explained away by means of this revisionary metaphysical speculation. Rāmānujāites' conclusion that all judgements are true is therefore not a formal description of the concept of error as such but, as already discussed, turns out to be a recommendation.

Modern exponents mistakenly present the logical argument of Nyāya regarding error in ontological terms, creating the suggestion as if for Nyāya the problem of error is a metaphysical one. But this problem of error for these philosophers (at least the early Naiyāyikas) is purely a formal one. They, in fact, are busy in formulating a logical condition for 'error' as

1. "*Khyāti-antarāṇāṁ tu sudūram api gatvā anyathāvabhāsaḥ āśrayanīyaḥ*" - SB p. 66.

such. The theory of *Anyathākhyāti*, as advanced by them, is only the logical account of error. It does not solve the problem of error by offering a revisionary metaphysical explanation saying that *really* there is no error. Rather its singular interest is to formulate a formal definition of error as distinguished from truth. If something is known *as it is* then the judgement is bound to be acceptable as true. And error, from all considerations, must imply some sort of deviation from this standard.

The Prābhākaras, who advocate realism and are always eager to explain away error, also admit misjudging at least in so far as the non-discrimination between the silver-description and the shell-description is concerned. A right judgement, according to this standard, is bound to be discriminative. It discriminates the thing that is judged from the rest of the things. When a thing is judged to be something other than what it actually is there is surely the lack of discrimination. All this shows that even in Prābhākaras there is the implicit admission of the formal condition of error, though in a different language. It is as Tatia points out "... *aviveka* in the sense of non-discrimination is the universal condition of error and as such can be accepted without prejudice to their metaphysical commitments by all schools of philosophy including the Nyāya realists and the Vedānta illusionists."[1] But this formal condition of error is not, however, found to be much emphasized by the Prābhākaras. In fact, they themselves are always hesitant to clearly admit the element of misjudging because of their confusing a logical discussion with that of psychology. Their point of view, like the Rāmānujāites', is mainly for explaining away error as such and not to elaborate the formal condition of error. They are not so much eager to define error. Rather they are more engaged in answering the question, 'How is error possible?' That error is due to non-discrimination becomes the conclusion when it is argued that silver is wrongly perceived in the shell because neither shell is

1. *Studies in Jaina Philosophy*, Jain Cultural Research Society, Banaras, 1951, p. 100.

fully seen nor silver is fully remembered. The logical problem of error is confusingly analysed in terms of psychology.

But Anyathākhyātivāda, as has been discussed here, is nothing but a reply to a logical question. It is doubtlessly a merit on the part of the Naiyāyikas, who are the great advocates of *nyāya* or valid reasoning, to emphasize the important point, that *Anyathā*, as meaning something otherwise can be regarded as the defining mark of all types of error. It is not merely a case of something as being misjudged as silver but anything being misjudged as another can be cited as the instance of error. Here the Nyāya philosopher is only interested to bring out the logic of the concept of error. The Nyāya theory of error is completely misconceived when it is understood only in terms of perceptual illustrations like shell-silver or rope-snake, etc. It is thought as if the perceptual illusions and hallucinations matter greatly for the Naiyāyikas. But here it can be said that it is only the analysis of the concept of error and not the source, from which the cognition of error actually originates, is the point of interest for the Naiyāyikas. *Anyathākhyāti* is not at all required to explain the psychological problem about erroneous perception but it is exclusively engaged to meet the problem from a logical point of view.

The Nyāya comes very near the contemporary analytical philosophers when it argues that error occurs due to mischaracterisation or mispredication. A judgement is said to be false when it does not correspond to its objective counterpart. The modern exponents of the Nyāya theory of error very often conclude that the 'this' is taken to be real in this theory because of its leanings towards a realistic ontology. But this is just to completely misrepresent the purely formal issue with which the theory is actually engaged. 'This' is taken as real not in the sense of an ontological entity. 'This' rather serves the purpose of being a logical referent. Being a logical referent, it is merely a formal assumption for all significant discourse. No realistic ontology is warranted here. If reference fails, the question of truth and falsity does not arise. Truth and falsity are questions of the true or false characterisations but not of having or failing to have the referent. The question of truth and falsity arises only on the assumption that reference has not failed.

The Nyāya philosophers, while discussing error through the examples of erroneous perceptions, seem to argue that in case of shell appearing as silver, shell as shell, however, is not known. Had shell been known as shell, there would not have been any error. Nor is this silver known as any ordinary silver in the complete sense of the term. Because in that case, the judgement that 'This is silver' would be continued as valid and would not be subsequently sublated by another judgement 'This is not silver; this is shell'. It is said that the thing is known as mere substantive. Its distinguishing characteristics by which it is to be known as shell as distinguished from silver in particular, are not known. That means its attributes which belong to it are not apprehended. Rather the attributes of silver which are otherwise real being attached to some other substantive are mistakenly attributed to the present object. So the silver-predication is the root of this error. The judgement 'This is silver' is wrong only because of silverness being mis-predicated of 'this'.

It need not be understood that according to Nyāya it is silver, which was apprehended as an object in some other place or in some other time, is brought out and is superimposed upon the given object, *i.e.*, shell. Anyathākhyātivāda is very often interpreted, both by its admirers as well as critics, to be maintaining that a thing which was seen in the past is again perceived by some supernatural perception at the point where a different object now exists. In fact some later Naiyāyikas introduce a complicated form of perception for interpreting error. It is argued that in error the shell is mistaken as silver which actually exists somewhere else, as for instance in the jeweller's shop (*āpaṇastha*) and is perceived where actually shell is present. This is possible by means of one form of extraordinary perception which is technically termed as *Jñāna-lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*. All this suggests as if silver as a thing is brought out and is mistaken for shell. Silver is argued to be not merely remembered, but to be actually perceived as an object. 'Silver' of erroneous apprehension is a matter of perception and not of memory.

But as we have seen before the Nyāya account of error is logically not committed to explain the perceptual error but is

to show how error as such is nothing but mere false characterisation. Though the early writers like Vācaspati, while discussing error, refer the instances of erroneous perception like shell and silver yet their account of error as mistaking one for another (*sadantaram sadantarāt manā gṛhyate*)[1] clearly indicates the logical implication of the theory. That error is due to mispredication is clearly brought out from the saying that error is due to *prakāra*. This theory of error, though is exposed in terms of illustrations derived from perceptual source, is actually referring to the logical condition of error. *Anyathā* literally means otherwise and does not at all suggest elsewhere (*anyatra*) or elsewhen (*anya kāla*). *Anyathākhyāti* means simply one thing being mistaken for another (*anyat anyathā gṛhyate*). It is clear from this that error is analysed here exclusively in the formalistic pattern and does not necessarily require any sort of psychologism or ontologism.

It may be noted in this connection that *pratyakṣa* which has been defined as knowledge due to sense-object contact by Gotama[2] and has been carried over by all the subsequent classical Nyāya philosophers does not imply that in shell-silver erroneous perception the silver is actually perceived in the present datum. Because there is no actual sense-contact of the object, silver. It is only the 'silver-predication' which is wrongly attributed to the present referent. That *Viparyaya* is not limited to perception becomes further clear when it is discussed separately under *apramā* while perception is accepted in the system as always being *pramā*.

From all these it may be well seen that the problem whether silver that is perceived in the shell-silver illusion is really existing or not is not a significant question in the logical model approved by Nyāya. 'Silver' is accepted in the judgement 'This is silver' only as a predicate As mere predicate, it is, however, not misleading. But when this predicate is wrongly related to 'this', error originates. When the Naiyāyikas argue for the reality of the 'silver' all that can be significantly brought out from their assertion is that 'silver' as a predicate is, how-

1. *Vide*: S. Kuppuswamy Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
2. *Vide*: NS, I.1.4.

ever, having an application though in a different context. The illusory predicate does not designate an empty class. The predicate 'silver' is not like the predicate 'barren mother'. It is clear that predicates like 'barren mother' can never be instantiated whereas 'silver' as a predicate can legitimately be instantiated. But it can never mean that the silver which is perceived in the erroneous perception is actually the silver which was previously perceived in the jeweller's shop. As in that case it would lead to the absurdity that the illusory silver is the same as the actual silver of the jeweller's shop.

Some later Naiyāyikas led by Gaṅgeśa, who object to Gotama's definition of perception as sense-object contact, re-formulate the definition so as to include what they call extra-ordinary perception (*alaukika pratyakṣa*).[1] This extraordinary perception is divided into three types: *Sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*, *Jñānalakṣaṇa* and *Yogaja*. Out of all these the second one, *i.e., Jñānalakṣaṇa* is utilised to account for error. It is argued by some Naiyāyikas that the perceptual character of error needs to be explained. It is a fact that where there is actually shell people mistake it to be silver. It is thought that silver is present then and there. How are we to account for the appearance of silver where there is no silver but shell existing all throughout? The explanation that silver is not as such perceived but rather the predicate of silverhood which is taken out from its original referent and it is attributed to the present referent because of certain similarities does not seem to satisfy them. How does the false attribution appear to be something actual?

They explain the perceptual error by pointing out that first there is a contact of sense with something present before it. Because of some defects (either physical or psychological) the sense apprehends such general features of the thing such as brightness, etc. and at the same time fails to notice its distinctive features. But such general features that are common to both shell and silver revive the memory impression of silver and as the result of that silver is cognised. The visual sense-organ "is in direct contact with the shell felt in its most generalised

1. Perception is defined by the later Naiyāyikas as immediacy (*Sākṣātkāritvam*).

aspect as 'this' or an 'existent'."[1] The relation between 'this' and the visual sense-organ is natural (*laukika*). But since the 'silver' which is somewhere else cannot directly come in contact with the visual sense-organ, another explanation is offered for its cognition. It is pointed out that the revival of the memory impression of silver acts as the relation between the visual sense-organ and the distant silver of the past. This relation, which is technically called as *jñāna-lakṣaṇa pratyāsatti*, is said as extraordinary (*alaukika*) in respect of the silver of the past and the visual sense-organ. And it is through such relation the silver that is actually cognised at some other place and at some other time, is again perceived here. Hence in illusion, there is perception of both the 'this' and the 'silver', though in different ways, *i.e.*, the 'this' is normally perceived and the 'silver' is supernormally perceived.[2]

Of course this need not suggest that these Naiyāyikas admit the two-cognition theory like the Prābhākaras. They like the Bhāṭṭas hold the erroneous cognition to be a complex one. The 'silver' is identified with the 'this' by means of a false relation. Unlike the Bhāṭṭas, they, however, maintain that this false relation presupposes the *laukika* perception of 'this' and the *alaukika* perception of 'silver'.

There are many difficulties in such an account of error. Apart from the general incomprehensibility of the doctrine of *Alaukika Pratyakṣa* it should be noted that such an account suggests that in illusory perception the silver that is perceived is actually an object belonging to the past. But this would mean that the previously perceived object is somehow brought out from its original basis and is identified with the present object. It is meaningless to say that two concrete objects like shell and silver can in such manner be identified. Error cannot be traced to the objective source. It is only a subjective phenomenon. It is not that the 'silver' that is previously perceived is superimposed on the present object, *i.e.*, shell but only the silver-characteristic is falsely attributed over the present

1. A.K.R. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
2. *"mamatvindriyajanyatvāt jātya saṁskāracca sākṣātkāritva mevobhayatra"*, TC, I, p. 525.

referent. Mere attribution of foreign characteristics is sufficient to cause error and there seems to be no logical necessity of bringing the actual object into the mode of perception. *Anyathākhyāti* seems to be quite comprehensible by means of *viparīta dharma āropaṇa* and there is hardly any need of postulating a sort of supernormal relation like *jñānalakṣaṇa sannikarṣa.*

Besides this, even by admitting *jñānalakṣaṇa sannikarṣa* in illusion, Naiyāyikas fail to distinguish their position from that of Bhāṭṭas. It is very often said that for Naiyāyikas the illusory silver is a matter of perception (though extraordinary) while for Bhāṭṭas it is only due to memory. But this contrast seems to be very much thin while the later Naiyāyikas, in elaborating the *jñānalakṣaṇa* perception for the explanation of error, admit that the perception of illusory silver is due to association and memory (*jātyasaṁskārāt*). In both the accounts, memory plays a vital role. It is memory which immediately brings the suggestion about the similarity of the presented object and the past one and then by association the characteristics of one are attributed to the other. Hence the acceptance of extraordinary perception, so far as error is concerned, does not seem to serve any additional purpose. Therefore the distinction between *smṛti* and *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* appears to be nothing factually significant. It is only by verbal manipulation that the impression is created as if the difference is something of factual importance.

In view of all these difficulties the account of *Anyathākhyāti* by means of *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* does not seem to be at all logically cogent. This addition of *jñānalakṣaṇa* by some later Naiyāyikas creates more difficulties instead of actually solving any problem. The original version of *Anyathākhyāti*, as exposed by the earlier Naiyāyikas, seems to be fitting well into the general logico-epistemological structure of Nyāya philosophy. If all true judgements (*yathārtha jñāna*) are defined in terms of their correspondence to relevant states-of-affair (*tadvati*) then by logical contrast the false judgement (*ayathārtha jñāna*) must mean just the opposite. If all knowledge is judgemental (*savikalpaka*) and is meant to reveal the nature of the given (*artha prakāśaka*) then the falsity must arise not with

regard to the given but with regard to the description or characterisation. Nyāya admits error only in the descriptive sphere. In this sense, *anyathākhyāti* stands for false judgement where the judgement fails to give the correct description of the referent. To judge something as it is, is, however, from all points of view true and any deviation from that standard doubtlessly implies falsity. All these clearly reveal that Nyāya, so far as error is concerned, is only interested in a logical problem of defining error in a clear formal category without confusing the problem of logic either with that of psychology or metaphysics.

4

The Buddhist Theory of Error

After the death of Buddha, his followers, in course of time, attempted for codification of the teachings and doctrines of the Master. Several councils took place and gradually the compilation of the canonical literature was possible. And these activities gave rise to the formation of different sects (mostly of religious type).[1] But the philosophical differences became gradually more explicit, of course, through the religious and theological differences and consequently systematic arguments were developed. In this context, the names of four main schools, *viz.*, the Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika, the Vijñāna-vāda and the Mādhyamika are most significant. While analysing the Viśiṣṭādvaita position in the first chapter, it is shown that its account of error is closely related with a metaphysical view regarding the nature of judgement. The Rāmāṇūjāites are shown to be clearly adhering to certain fundamental metaphysical stipulation. Both for the Viśiṣṭādvaitins as well as the Prābhākaras the nature of judgement is such that it must be revelatory in character. It must point at something beyond itself. And so far as this pointing at something beyond is concerned the judgement cannot be falsified. Truth, in this sense, is intrinsic to all judgements. The ordinarily called false judgements are so interpreted that the fundamental claim that all judgements are true remains, in all cases, unaffected.

In Buddhism, on the other hand, the fundamental claim which is universally accepted is that judgement is such that it cannot faithfully represent or describe the referent and consequently all judgements are intrinsically invalid (*aprāmāṇya*).

1. A detailed list of all such diverse sects is found in *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I by Umesh Mishra, Allahabad, pp. 354-503.

This claim for universal error in case of all judgements puts the Buddhists in the opposite camp. The negative attitude towards judgement gives rise to a different analysis of error.

(1) ĀTMAKHYĀTI

The Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika and the Vijñāna-vāda are known as the advocates of a widely known theory of error, *i.e.*, *Ātmakhyāti*.[1] However this theory of *Ātmakhyāti* is explained differently in each of these schools. The Vaibhāṣikas are identified as Sarvāstivādins who emphasize the Buddhistic proposition '*sarvam asti*' (everything exists). By *sarvam* only the *dharmas* and not the *pudgalas* are really meant. The term '*dharma*' in this context may mean those characteristics which characterise the uniquely particular (*sva-lakṣaṇa*).[2] The term '*pudgala*' may mean the conceptualised object or composite of those characteristics which range over a number of particulars. It is, in other words, those universal characteristics (*sāmānya lakṣaṇas*) that conceal the knowledge of the bare particular. As such, all ordinary empirical knowledge being endowed with

1. *Vide*: B.K. Sengupta: "The Problem of Nacre-Silver (Śukti-Rūpya) in Indian Philosophy", *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, June, 1952, No. 2, pp. 157-176, and A.K.R. Chaudhuri: *The Doctrine of Māyā*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-36.
2. '*Dharma*' is often translated as elements by many writers on Buddhism. But I have ignored this rendering because 'element' in English language has a substantive use while Buddhism, in general, is opposed to any substantive approach. It is primarily attributive which gives more importance to characteristics than to the substance. I also do not take *svalakṣaṇa* as bare sensation in the Kantian sense as many have already taken but as unique particular in the sense of a referent for the logically proper name. To put it in other words, *svalakṣaṇa* is mere thatness. It is unique by itself. Here the Buddhists, according to me, are not involved with the psychological but with the logical analysis of error. *Svalakṣaṇa* is clearly declared to be beyond linguistic fold when it is termed as unutterable (*anabhilāpya*). That which is utterable (language) is always more or less a thought-construction. *Vide*: Dignāga's saying, "*Śabdā-vikalpa-yonayaḥ, vikalpāḥ śabda-yonayaḥ*" quoted by Stcherbatsky, *The Buddhist Logic*, Vol. I, p. 107. That which is unique and is characterised by itself is termed as *svalakṣaṇa*, "*svam asādhāraṇam lakṣaṇam tattvam svalakṣaṇam*": *Nyāya-bindu-ṭīkā*, p. 15.

the idea of *pudgala* or universal characterisation becomes fundamentally erroneous.

The Vaibhāṣikas by accepting the *dharmas* alone to be the referent of judgements are treated as realists. But so far as knowledge in the ordinary sense is concerned, the Vaibhāṣikas seem to emphasize the point that all such knowledge is, by natural implication, not of the bare referent. Those are rather from the very start involved with universalisation or conceptualisation. Any ordinary judgement, though its prime objective is to refer the bare particular, fails to attain this objective because it, besides referring or pointing at the particular, is also responsible for attributing the concept of aggregate, whole or composite upon the real *dharma*. This postulation of a whole or the attribution (*samāropa*) of *pudgala* upon *dharma* is due to what is known as *Satkāya dṛṣṭi*.[1]

To put it in other words, the Vaibhāṣikas are committed to accept all judgements to be erroneous because judgements, by definition, refer to a determinate object (*savikalpaka vastu*) which is not a bare unrelated simple particular but a universalised complex.

Here a point may be raised. If all judgements are doomed to be false then how one is to account the ordinarily accepted distinction between a true and a false judgement? It is pointed out that the Vaibhāṣikas hold the doctrine of *Ātmakhyāti*. According to a general version of *Ātmakhyāti* "Error consists in regarding the internal object as external, the mental as the extra-mental (*jñānākārasyaiva bahiravabhāso vibhramaḥ*)".[2] This would suggest that in case of a false judgement like 'This is silver' it is the silvery predicate, which is surely subjective and in no way belongs to the externally given referent, *i.e.*, 'this'. This silvery predicate is wrongly predicated of the given. 'This' as the bare referent of the erroneous judgement is, however, real. Only when it is characterised as silver error results. Error is, no doubt, due to mischaracterisation. Only the characteristic, which is attributed of the given, is something

1. A.K. Chatterjee: *The Yogācāra Idealism*, Banaras Hindu Univercity Publications, 1962, p. 3.
2. A.K. Roy Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

internal or subjective and does not in any sense belong to the given. From this explanation of Ātmakhyāti, it may at best mean that for the Vaibhāṣikas the ordinarily called false judgement refers something mental as extra-mental or internal as external whereas the so called true judgement takes something in the same way in which it actually is. It is only in error, something internal is being judged as external.

But this explanation on close scrutiny appears to be no more than a pseudo-explanation. Because, as we have discussed earlier, for the Vaibhāṣikas who hold the reality of *dharmas* alone as against *pudgalas* the real must stand for the bare particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) which is not characterised from without but from within. This bare particular thus is not different from the unique referent in any situation. In any judgement this unique particular is necessarily referred and in that sense all judgements point at something beyond. But no judgement, by its very nature, is confined to the bare given, rather each judgement always qualifies the given by means of some generic features (*sāmānya lakṣaṇa*) which do not belong to it. It is only in this sense, all judgements are declared as erroneous since they do not merely refer the mere 'that' but necessarily attribute certain foreign features to 'that'.

Now if it is conceded that in any judgement there is every possibility (logical possibility) of falling short of the bare given and of the inclusion of certain foreign characteristics, then the false judgement alone need not be distinguished from the true ones by this mode of reasoning. If, in the case of a false judgement 'This is silver' the silver-characteristics are said to be something internal and are said to have been wrongly applied to 'this'; then, in a right judgement too (*i.e.*, while silver is actually judged as silver) the silvery characteristics, in so far as they actually describe 'this' (the non-descriptive unique individual), there is the same logical possibility of error. Because the 'this', by its very nature, is devoid of any universalisation. The very attempt of grouping it as a member under the universal, *i.e.*, silverhood is surely to put something more than what is actually presented. That, which is applied over the given particular, is surely devoid of any externality and

hence may be termed as internal. That something internal is judged as external is not only applicable in case of erroneous judgement but it also affects equally the non-erroneous judgement. The *dharmas* are never known as they really are but always as somewhat different.

This shows that the theory of *Ātmakhyāti* as rendered by the Vaibhāṣikas cannot logically aim at explaining the empirical distinction between true and false perceptual judgements. The theory, from this point of view, can easily be seen as not really explaining the empiric illusion and erroneous perception. It actually is not meant to account for the distinction between empirically true and false judgements. So far as it points out that in error something (mental) is wrongly judged as something different (extra-mental), there is no logical inconsistency. It is the very nature of error under all circumstances that a thing when judged differently than what it is, confusion starts. Thus far the Ātmakhyātivādins are not to be seriously opposed by any rival theorists.

But the differences between these several theories become explicit when from the morale of this logical distinction between truth and error certain philosophical view is drawn. The Vaibhāṣikas being Buddhists adopt the conclusion that all judgements, since those are not confined to the *svalakṣaṇas*, are fundamentally false (*svataḥ aprāmāṇya*). This conclusion is, no doubt, based on a logical argument, *viz.*, all descriptions carry the possibility of misdescriptions. Since no judgement can be framed without describing[1] and can exclusively refer the pure individual, each judgement, therefore, falls short of the real. If the real is taken as bare *dharma* then this conclusion regarding the invalidity of all judgements inevitably follows. As all judgements necessarily distort the *dharma* by attributing *pudgala* on it.

The Sautrāntikas agree with the Vaibhāṣikas in so far as they admit the *svalakṣaṇas*. In this sense both of them belong to one camp. But while the Vaibhāṣikas bluntly admit the direct perception of the *svalakṣaṇas*, the Sautrāntikas hesitate to admit the direct perception of such data. The difference

1. *Vide*: *Kalpanā hi buddhi-viśeṣaḥ* quoted by Hiriyanna, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

between the two schools has been summed up as one's acceptance of the doctrine of direct perception of the external object (*bāhya-pratyakṣa-vāda*) and other's acceptance of the inferability of the external object (*bāhya-anumeya-vāda*). The main difficulty that the Sautrāntikas bring against the Vaibhāṣikas is that since the fundamental Buddhistic doctrine of momentariness (*kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-vāda*) suggests that everything remains only for a moment and then it is succeeded by another; it is difficult to admit in this context that the object is perceived directly. For the object to be perceived, at least two moments are necessary. At one moment, the object serves as the cause of perception and at the other, it is actually perceived. But this could suggest that the object must remain for both of these two moments.[1] And this is exactly which is rejected by the doctrine of momentariness. If objects are really momentary, it is only a past object that is perceived. Hence, what is apprehended in perception, though exists, is not apprehended at the moment when it exists.

Here the object being momentary stands for a particular *svalakṣaṇa.* The Sautrāntikas argue that the *svalakṣaṇas* alone are real. They are not directly perceived but are merely inferred from the past impressions. It is the impression (*saṁskāra*) which is known and through impression alone the *svalakṣaṇa* is inferred. Some have taken the Sautrāntika viewpoint as resembling the Lockean representationism.[2] But the difficulty in such a rendering is that while the Sautrāntikas only infer the *svalakṣaṇas* to be external the Lockean representationism postulates a substance-in-itself as the source of all ideas. The Sautrāntika, as a Buddhistic school, is opposed to all forms of substantive approach.

But whether the *svalakṣaṇas* are directly perceived or are inferred, nothing significant seems to be gained so far as the discussion of error is concerned. For both these schools of Buddhism adhere to the position that any judgement, in so far

1. "*varttamānālambanagrahaṇe ca kṣaṇabhaṅgabādhaḥ*", *Madhyānta-vibhāga-sūtrabhāṣyaṭīkā* by Sthiramati, Part I, ed. V. Bhattacharya and G. Tucci, Luzac & Co., 1932, p. 21.
2. *Cf.* Chatterjee and Datta, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

as it involves *kalpanās* is bound to be erroneous. It characterises the given more than what actually it has. Since knowing is judgemental there is no escape from conceptualisation. It is this subjective attribution or conceptualisation which always distorts the real. The view as to whether the object (*artha*) is known directly or indirectly does not at all affect the account of error. Both agree that all judgements, carrying the possibility of misjudging, are fundamentally falling short of the given.

Dr Sengupta writes that the Sautrāntika and the Vaibhāṣika, however, recognise the externality of the substratum of superimposition. In the nacre-silver, the nacre, according to this interpretation, is said to be the substratum of the erroneous cognition of silver. This is, therefore, called *Sādhiṣṭhānabhramavāda*. The piece of silver falsely cognised on a piece of nacre is existent only in knowledge and the error arises only when we falsely suppose it to be present outside the knowledge.[1]

This rendering of the Sautrāntika-Vaibhāṣika position suggests that their view on error is actually about the instances of erroneous perception. While nacre, for instance, is misperceived as silver it is argued that silver is real as something mental and nacre is real as something objective. Error arises in identifying the internal as the external. But if the argument of these Buddhists is carried to its logical end in the way indicated above, then under no ground of comprehensibility it can be asserted that the nacre is to be accepted as really existing outside. The ground on which silver is argued to be mental or subjective, on the same ground too nacre can be said to be subjective. If the *svalakṣaṇas* or the bare particulars are accepted as only real, then under no logical ground nacre can be said to be real. Nacre is plainly not *svalakṣaṇa* but is already involved with *sāmānyalakṣaṇas*. To put it in other words, to judge the *given*, both as silver as well as nacre, from this point of view, becomes erroneous. It is the very nature of judgement that when it judges the thing, it judges it not as it is, but as something more than what it actually is. To that extent any

1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 157-162.

judgement carries the possibility of giving a distorted picture of the real.

So not only one perceptual judgement is favoured in preference to another but all judgements whether perceptual or inferential are clearly declared to be erroneous. Ātmakhyātivāda precisely stands as a critique of all judgements. There is absolutely no point in emphasizing the theory of *Ātmakhyāti* as a theory about illusion or erroneous perception. Here the Buddhist philosophers are not engaged in a psychological problem about erroneous perception, but are involved in a logical problem of analysing and determining the concept of error. The theory is not meant to explain the empirical distinction between a true and a false judgement. The theory rather concludes, by way of revising the meaning of term 'real' as bare particulars, that all judgements, being involved with concepts and classifications are intrinsically false. Hence the criticism[1] that Buddhism fails to distinguish an empirically true judgement from a false one becomes simply outside the point. By accepting the test of truth in terms of *arthakriyā*, the Sautrāntikas distinguish between a true and a false judgement.

The Vijñānavādins who are also identified as Yogācāras accept the doctrine of *Ātmakhyāti* in a slightly different manner.[2] They, however, subscribe to the general version of this theory of error, *viz.*, in all cases of falsity it is the mental which is mistakenly judged as extra-mental. While explaining the theory in terms of a specific illusory perception of snake-rope, it is argued that it is the subjective idea of snake which is mistakenly thought to be present outside. Thus far, there is, of course, no genuine difference between these Vijñāna-vādins and the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas. The difference lies in some minute details when the Vijñāna-vādin denies with emphasis the reality of the external given. The theory is not

1. This is the line of criticism advanced by Karl H. Potter against Buddhism in general. *Op. cit.*, pp. 187-195.
2. The school is called *Yogācāra* since it declares that the absolute truth (*Bodhi*) is attainable only by those who practise '*yoga*' and '*ācāra*'. *Yogācāra* is known to have brought out the practical side of the philosophical teachings of Buddhism while *Vijñāna-vāda* brings out its speculative or argumentative aspects.

prepared to interpret the referent of the judgement in an objective mode as opposed to the subjective mode. Let me explain my point of view in further details.

For both the Vaibhāṣikas as well as the Sautrāntikas, reality consists of the unique particulars in the sense of bare referents for logically proper names. Both the schools adhere to this point so far as the plane of logical reasoning is concerned. The Vijñānavādins too adopt this point for the purpose of their own logical argument. In this sense, all these schools accept a view common to the Buddhistic philosophy in general. However, the differences between the Vaibhāṣika-Sautrāntika viewpoint on the one hand and that of the Vijñānavāda on the other, is found to be very much explicit when these schools seem to draw different metaphysical conclusions from this common logical point. The Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas interpret the logical referent of the judgement not merely as bare particular but also as somewhat objective (*artha*) and hence external to subjective sphere. This way of elucidating, though is not demanded by the nature of their own logical analysis, yet is accepted because of a specific realistic bias.

The Vijñānavādins, on the other hand, take these bare unique particulars, which initially are the outcome of a logical analysis of the nature of judgements, as something subjective and as such term them as *vijñānas* (ideas). It is idea alone which is accepted as real. While stating the position of the Vijñānavāda, Vasubandhu accepts the mere awareness (*vijñaptimātra*) as the only *sat* and thereby repudiates all forms of externality and objectivity.

These different schools in Buddhism seem to have drawn divergent conclusions from the common logical account of the bare particular and thereby become distinguished from each other. The Vaibhāṣikas assert that the given referent of the judgement is directly known or perceived from without. As such they are identified as direct realists who assert the direct acquaintance of the object of perception. But while for a direct realist the object is as it is perceived, for the Vaibhāṣika the object, though is acquainted in all knowledge, yet it is distorted because of its involvement with the conceptual characters of the judgement, *i.e.*, generality (*Jāti*), quality

(*guṇa*), action (*karma*), name (*nāma*) and substance (*dravya*). The Sautrāntikas, though agree with the Vaibhāṣikas about the reality of the external given, yet, instead of granting the direct acquaintance of these, admit an indirect knowledge. Of course, for both the schools the final conclusion remains the same, *viz.*, though the real is such that it cannot be comprehended by means of any linguistic judgement, yet it cannot be denied being the external referent of all judgements.

The Vijñānavādins, so far as logical plane is concerned, have no difference of opinion with that of the other two schools. If the unique particulars are the referent *of* all judgements, then those can never, the Vijñānavādins think, be something external to knowledge. The judgement must refer to the idea (*vijñāna*) and not the external object (*artha*) as its referent. Here it may be marked that for this school the given real is not only *pudgala-śūnya* but also *dharma-śūnya*. Denial of the external objectivity (*Bāhya-artha-śūnyatā*) is the main contention of Vijñānavādins. The given real is precisely of the nature of *vijñāna*. Though taken as mere idea it is, as usual to Buddhism, infinitely manifold[1] and constantly changing.[2] To all the Buddhistic schools, "general features like cow-ness have no objective reality . . . and are entirely due to the nature of thought."[3] The reality of the *vijñāna* cannot be ordinarily grasped because the nature of the ordinary knowledge is such that it must know its idea in a manner much different from what the idea actually is. The particular *vijñāna* is never known as it is, rather always it is distorted by the application of the generic characteristics so natural to the very being of the ordinary judgement. The thought construction (*kalpanā*) is responsible for distorting the real *vijñāra* and by the application of the general features like *Jāti, etc.* it creates a misleading suggestion that as if the *vijñānas* are external objects (*artha*). Judgement by its very nature aims at static objects endowed with generic features. Hence any judgement being incapable of presenting the unique idea is fundamentally erroneous. The Yogācāra

1. *Anantam*, quoted by Stcherbatsky, *op. cit.*, p. 513.
2. *pratikṣaṇa-viśarāru, ibid.*
3. M. Hiriyanna: *op. cit.*, p. 221.

Buddhist clearly holds that with the only exception of Buddha's knowledge all other knowledge is erroneous.[1] Buddha's knowledge is declared to be free from error because it transcends the dichotomy of subject and object while all other knowledges (in the sense of ordinary judgement) are false due to the mental construction of the said dichotomy.[2] In other words, it is the mere awareness (*vijñaptimātra*), which is free from subject-object polarization, is regarded as the ultimate point of reference in the philosophy of Vijñānavāda.

For Vijñānavāda, error consists in the wrong objectification of what is essentially a state of consciousness.[3] There is really no existence of external object. The mere apparent ascription of external objectivity over the internal *vijñāna* is sufficient to create error. "The real in this system is the constructive activity of consciousness which alone invests things with significance. Independence of the subjective act of knowing is here the very essence of the unreal: the 'this' (*idam*) in the context of the illusion, 'this is a snake', is false.[4] It is the subjective idea of snake which is mistakenly thought to be presented outside.

Many expose the Vijñānavādins' view on error by analysing the erroneous judgement 'This is silver' in a peculiar manner. According to this analysis, 'this' is interpreted as predicate and 'silver' as the subject of the judgement at issue (unlike the realistic interpretations as advanced by the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṁsakas).[5] While both the Sautrāntikas and the Vaibhāṣikas have to maintain the reality of the *artha* and the unreality of the *vijñāna*, the Vijñānavādins, on the other hand, hold just the reverse view. They argue for the reality of

1. "*Sarvam ālambane bhrāntam muktvā Tathāgata-jñānam, iti yogācāra-matena*", *Nyāya-binduṭīkā-tippaṇī* (ed. by Stcherbatsky in Bibliotheca Buddhica), p. 12.
2. Stcherbatsky, *op cit* , p. 537.
3. An idea is mistaken for an external object (*idam*)--*yadantar jñeya-rūpaṁ tu bahirāvad avabhāsate*: T.R.V. Murti: *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1955, p. 215.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.
5. *Cf* Prof. S. Sen: A note on the Yogācāra-Sautrāntika theory of adhyāsa, included in *Prof. Hiriyanna's Commemoration Volume*, Mysore, 1952, pp. 175-178.

the *vijñāna* and the unreality of the *artha*. 'Silver' in the judgement 'This is silver' stands for the mental idea. It is not out there. It is, though really a mere idea, is wrongly taken to be a non-idea. When idea is taken to be a non-idea, error originates.

All this may not sound very much unpalatable even to the opponents of the Vijñānavādins, since they also insist that in error one thing is mistaken for something else. Error, as the Naiyāyikas say, is due to taking something else. The only difference lies on the matter of ontological preference. The Vijñānavāda not only suggests that in error it is the subjective idea which is wrongly thought to be objective, but also the so called objective reality is not real at all. To put it in other words, when the erroneous judgement is replaced by a correcting judgement 'This is not silver', the negation in the correcting judgement actually negates the '*this*' and not the 'silver'. It is now evident that this analysis of the erroneous judgement is definitely unusual. Grammatically one takes 'this' to be the subject and 'silver' to be the predicate. And in the correcting judgement 'This is not silver', *not* merely negates '*silver*' and not 'this'.

Now supposing one agrees with the analysis of error as said to have been advanced by the Vijñānavādins in the aforesaid lines, a question is still raised about the logical distinction between a false judgement and a true judgement. If in case of a false judgement it is argued that the very idea of externality is the root of error and 'silver' which is merely a mental idea is mistakenly thought to be present outside as an object, then at least by contrast from a logical point of view it may mean that in case of a true judgement, where the object is actually a piece of silver, there is actually an external referent to correspond to the internal idea of silver. That means, in case of valid perceptual judgement there is complete harmony between the internal idea and the external object, whereas in case of judgements of erroneous perception there is lack of this harmony. All this suggests that as if according to the Vijñānavādins the idea of externality is denied in case of a false judgement alone.

But this, by no means, seems to be a faithful rendering of

the Vijñānavādins' view of error. These philosophers do not at all maintain that objects are non-existent during one cognition and are existent during another. They rather strongly hold that there are only ideas and thus they are in favour of totally dispensing with objects. Objects are not denied in case of false judgements alone but also in case of ordinarily called true judgements. If they would be talking about the lack of externality only in cases of false judgements, then their theory would not be different from that of the realists who too maintain that in error there is no harmony between idea and the corresponding object. It is to be clearly marked that not only the 'this' is denied in case of a false judgement 'This is silver' but also the 'this' is rejected in case of a true judgement 'This is silver'. In no case objectivity can ever be admissible, since the idea is alone taken in this philosophy to be real. It should not mean that ideas like silveriness, etc. are finally accepted by the Vijñānavādins. All such ideas also are infected with conceptualisation. The *vijñāna* which is free from any sense of conceptualisation is ultimately accepted.

To put it in other words, by this view of the Vijñānavādins both ordinarily called true as well as false judgements are declared to be erroneous since in both cases there remains a false sense of objectivity. Since, as said earlier, no judgement either perceptual or inferential is possible without the implicit acceptance of the dichotomy of subject and object, it is maintained in the same logical tone that judgement as such is erroneous—a position quite consistent with the general Buddhistic doctrine, that is, all judgements are intrinsically false.

That means, the Vijñānavādins' rendering of *Ātmakhyāti* so far as logical nature of the argument is concerned, does not essentially become different from either the Vaibhāṣika or the Sautrāntika versions of error. To all these schools, all judgements are really false though ordinarily judgements are distinguished as either true or false. To put it in a different language, here these Buddhist philosophers, while dealing with the problem of error, pose themselves precisely as the critic of all judgements. Error is declared to be due to conceptualisation. Since concepts are unavoidable in any form of language, language as such is rejected for knowing the real. The analysis of error

gives rise to a negative attitude towards language. Thus the discussion of error though is pursued in terms of perceptual instances like illusion, hallucination, etc. still is not really confined to perception at all. It is rather primarily occupied with the concept of error as such. The empirical distinction between a true and a false judgement is not at all to be explained by means of the theory of *Ātmakhyāti.* There is, in fact, a separate explanation offered by them for accounting the empirical distinction between truth and falsity.

Now before discussing these Buddhists' explanation about the distinction between an ordinarily called true and a false judgement one is faced with the problem as to how at all the *vijñāna* appears as if it is an external object if really there is no external object. The Buddhist philosophers, here, have a reply saying that the so called knowledge of externality is due to beginningless nescience.[1] This seems to be a general explanation for all errors. It is this nescience which is responsible for the creation of concepts. The origination of concepts gives rise to the dichotomy of subject and object within the manifold series of ideas. As the result of this initial confusion made due to conceptualisation, the *vijñāna* which is fleeting and dynamic appears as if it is static (*sthira*) and objective (*artha*). And once this conceptual look at idea is withdrawn and judgemental way of knowing by means of *jāti etc.* is removed the *vijñāna* is revealed as it really is and perfect enlightenment or *Bodhisatva* is attained.

It is, from this ultimate point of view, argued that all judgemental way of knowing is fundamentally defective. Both the judgements 'This is silver' and 'This is not silver; this is shell' are equally erroneous because of having a false sense of objectivity and externality. Only in case of the former, the false sense of objectivity regarding silver is immediately admitted after the said judgement is replaced by the latter judgement. In case of the latter judgement, though the false sense of objectivity regarding 'silver' is already granted, the lack of objectivity with regard to 'shell', here, is not realised. Because this latter judgement is practically efficacious. It is

1. Appaya Dikṣita: *Parimala*, Nirnaya Sagar Edn., p. 26.

this practical test which decides the fate of ordinary judgements either as true or as false. Though all judgements are responsible for misleading objectivity and externality over the *vijñāna*, in some cases of the judgements this mispredication is at once known while in others it is not easily known due to long predisposition (*vāsana*). "The Vijñānavādins try to justify the distinction by asserting that the objects of cognitions producing practical efficiency (*arthakriyā*) are *samvṛti satya* (empirically real) while the objects of illusion are *mithyā* (absolutely unreal), though both are equally non-existent as external to cognitions."[1]

The explanation of truth in terms of *arthakriyā* is found to be acceptable by the Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra schools of Buddhism. This defence may not be very much supported by science. It is true as Śaṁkaraites sometimes put that even a false judgement is quite practically efficacious.[2] In modern times it is already noticed about the danger of identifying truth with workability in the context of pragmatism.

Now whether there is one scientifically cogent explanation about error as distinguished from truth seems to be immaterial for these philosophers. Though they start discussing error by citing common empirical instances of illusion, hallucination, *etc.*, yet their main point, as it has been indicated before, is to account for error as such. By asserting all linguistic judgements to be erroneous the Buddhist philosopher is not stating anything regarding matter-of-fact. The world of concrete reality is not all at once changed into phantasmagoria once the invalidity of all knowledge is conceded. It is absolutely immaterial from the point of view of fact whether one calls the illusory silver to be objective or subjective. The contention that "All judgements are erroneous" is not descriptive but prescriptive. The *Ātmakhyāti*,[3] while insisting for the *khyāti* of

1. G.B. Bhatt: *op. cit.*, p. 103.
2. *Vide*: Madhusūdana Saraswatī: *Advaita Siddhi*, Nirnaya Sagar Edn., p. 334.
3. The theory of *Ātmakhyāti* is also sometimes named as *Vijñānakhyāti*.

the *vijñānas*, merely advocates for a revision of conceptual framework. The changed conceptual framework is not to be verified either as true or as false. Nothing is lost as a matter of fact whether one regards *arthas* to be the referent or the *vijñānas* to be the referent of the judgement.

One might say that *Ātmakhyāti* is a recommendation for alternative language. Some have indeed thought that the prescription of *vijñānas* as against *artha* is only to adopt a phenomenalist position of advocating sense-datum language.[1] Now whether the term '*vijñāna*' can be taken to be the same as the term 'sense-datum' is yet a point to decide. Neither the language of *vijñāna* nor that of sense-datum has been yet available for a neat comparison and contrast. There is yet much doubt about the possibility of an alternative language like that of sense-datum.[2] Unless there is found to be a complete and overall move for an alternative language, mere change and replacement of one or two concepts by means of some other do not seem to be sufficient to conclude that there is a clear move for adopting an alternative language like that of sense-datum.

So one may likewise be very much sceptical about the feasibility of this language of *vijñānas*. But one thing is certain that the very attempt of accounting the conceptual framework by means of *vijñāna* as against *artha* is surely not finding something new or eliminating something old so far as the facts of experience are concerned. In this sense these theories are neither supporting nor conflicting with any facts of experience. To say that all judgements are erroneous or that the reality of *vijñānas* is not revealed due to the beginningless nescience is surely not to report about the world. These utterances are primarily meant for transcending the plane of judgements. Because that plane is considered to be the source of all falsity. It is the judgemental plane which keeps somebody away from knowing the ideas as ideas. To put it in other

1. S.R. Mukharjee: The Problem of Error in Indian Philosophy, *Bharati, Utkal University Journal*—Humanities, Vol. III, No. 5, 1969.
2. Isaiah Berlin: Empirical Propositions and Hypothetical Statements, *Mind*, 1950.

form, in this theory there is a clear indication for a revolt against the language as a tool for knowing the real. Linguistic rendering of the real by means of judgement is, by no means, faithful to the real.

Very often a charge is brought by the rival classical as well as the modern philosophers against the Vijñānavādins that their account of error directly conflicts with experience.[1] These critics argue that it is a fact that the silver in the erroneous perception is perceived as out there. Even if one agrees the silver to be subjective, yet the very 'this' (*idam*), which is confused as silver cannot be denied. In other words, the rejection of 'this' is contrary to all experience. One only negates silverhood wrongly applied over 'this' but not 'this' as such.

Here again it can be said that the Vijñānavādins' account of error does not deny the actuality of 'this'. It does not at all suggest that in the nacre-silver illusion where nacre is misperceived as silver nacre is to be treated as an idea and not as a concrete physical object. If the nacre is mistaken as silver then after the mistake is revealed the nacre has got to be accepted as a concrete physical object and there can be no argument on that. The philosophical theory is not a scientific one so that its sayings be taken as scientifically true or false. By maintaining that both silver as well as nacre are not real as external objects the Vijñānavāda is merely recommending for adopting a different conceptual framework. It is not conflicting with actual facts of experience. It leaves all our empirical activities fully unaffected.[2] He is only demanding for a conceptual revision.

The Satkhyātivādin, as pointed out earlier, demands for an extra-mental basis for silver. The Vijñānavādin here differs.

1. "Nobody perceives cognition itself as a pillar, as a wall, and so forth. But everybody perceives them as objects of cognition"—Śaṁkara: VSS, II.II.28; Vācaspati: "*anubhava-virodhāt*"—BM; *Nyāya-Pariśuddhi* of Vedānta Deśika, p. 45.
   See also S.K. Maitra: *op.cit.*, p. 225 and A. Bhattacarya: *op. cit.*, p. 251.
2. R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, ed. *Pramāṇa vārttika* by Dharmakīrti II, Journal of Bihar & Orissa Research Society, XXIV-XXV, Patna, p. 394.

The silver, according to him, is not objective at all. It is an internal idea which is wrongly thought to be out there. The opponent demands that if the extra-mental reference or error is not admitted, then how can one talk of having such an experience? Is it not that experience means experience of something? If it is *of* something then surely it refers to something beyond itself, which is out there. There is an extra-mental reference. But the Vijñānavādin here retorts by saying that this version of the opponent virtually explains away the very problem of error. The very fact of error means that which is supposed to be out there, is not actually there. The very fact of illusion, *etc.* suggests that experience is not always experience of something. The Vijñānavādin is here pointing out that normally no one would admit the silver to be out there while nacre is confused as silver. He tries to emphasize the subjective import so far as the connotation of the term 'experience' is considered. Experience essentially connotes experiencing by some person. It does not warrant logically whatever is experienced must be out there. From the statement 'I experience' it does not logically follow that what I experience is there.

Now if in the case of erroneous apprehensions, experiences do not warrant objectivity then one can go little ahead and conclude that all apprehensions including erroneous as well as non-erroneous ones, do not guarantee objectivity. It has been pointed out before that according to these Buddhist philosophers in both the erroneous as well as non-erroneous judgements the referent of the judgements is infected with the sense of objectivity. It is maintained that no experience is objectively significant. If in illusory perception there is the false awareness of objectivity then in the so called valid perception too, it is, in the same manner, maintained that there is a false sense of objectivity. Ātmakhyātivāda, like other theories, only analyses the concept of error. Its interest is not to give a psychological explanation regarding illusions, dreams and hallucinations. The Vijñānavādins accept the *vijñānas* alone to be the referent of all judgements. But judgements, by their very nature, are infected with conceptualisation and as such cannot reveal the nature of the *vijñānas*. Hence all judgements

are declared to be false. Judgements, according to the Vijñāna-vādins, claim a pseudo-sense of objectivity (*ālambana*).

Hence from all these it is evident that the Vijñānavādins, by advocating all judgements to be erroneous, do not put forth an empirical proposition whose validity can be measured scientifically. The claim that ideas alone are real is a typically metaphysical utterance. It is therefore irrelevant to say that such metaphysical utterance directly conflicts with experience. Hence the charge against the Vijñānavādins that they greatly conflict with experience does not mean much.

One of the popular criticisms levelled against the Vijñāna-vādins' account of error is that its denial of the external basis of error is most absurd. This criticism is, in a way, a species of the previous criticism that this account of error conflicts with experience. The Ātmakhyātivādins suggest that after the error is rectified only the external objectivity of silver is withdrawn. It is said, only 'thisness' (*idantā*) is denied but not silver. Here the critics argue that in such a case the sublating judgement would be of the form of 'I am silver' instead of the form 'This is not silver'.[1] In this criticism it is implied that the judgement 'This is not silver' not only negates the 'silver' but also affirms the 'this'—the external basis. The external basis of erroneous judgement, thus, cannot be denied. Since nobody formulates such absurd judgement like 'I am silver' the theory of Ātmakhyāti is misleading.

But the Vijñānavādin by accepting the *vijñāna* need not be understood to have accepted the reality of 'I' or the self. It as a Buddhistic school is an advocate of *nairātmyavāda* tradition. And as such here the term *vijñāna* need not have any substantive import. The reality of the *vijñāna* does not mean that subject as a substance is real as against the external objectivity. It is only the experiencing (*vijñaptimātra*) that can be admitted with significance. Anything beyond experiencing, either the subjective realm or the objective realm, is not acceptable. As both of these are the creations of conceptualisations. That is

1. "*pūrovartitvena rajatasya bādheahaṁ rajataṁ iti syāt*", *Siddhānta candrikā* of Rāmakṛṣṇa, Nirnaya Sagar Edn., p. 50. See also Vācaspati: BM, p. 26 and Jayanta Bhaṭṭa: NM, p. 178.

why the *vijñāna* is said to be beyond subject-object polarization. For the Vijñānavādin it is not that the 'silver-idea' is real but the idea free from any conceptualisation and categorisation is alone acceptable. The logic of the theory of Ātmakhyāti virtually aims at condemning the ordinary mode of expression. The theory appeals for a revision of the established conceptual set up without making any violence to the nature of fact. This appeal for a revision is, no doubt, based on a negative attitude towards language as a whole.

The point that I am trying to make here is that mere conflict with ordinary mode of expression is not by itself a sufficient charge to undermine the position of the Vijñāna-vādins. One can, of course, challenge this theory of *Ātmakhyāti* by showing certain internal inconsistencies instead of attacking with a sword which does not touch it.

To sum up the whole discussion, the theory of *Ātmakhyāti*, as advocated by all the three schools of Buddhism, is clearly not an empirical theory whose conclusion can be tested by means of scientific test. The theory is not meant to give a psychological account about the process of erroneous perception. Its problem is not to find out how actually illusions, *etc.* occur. Its aim is rather to face the problem of error by analysing the nature of judgement from a logical point of view. While the theory analyses the nature of judgement it has clearly indicated its preference for the logically significant point that error arises due to misjudging or mispredication. So far as judgement is concerned, mistake, according to this theory also, is said to be due to predicative part and not due to referent. Mere awareness (*vijñaptimātra*) as the referent of all judgements is never denied by the theory. Only the theory insists that judgement, because of its very nature, never grasps the referent as it is, but takes it as different from what it is. To take the dynamic, fleeting *vijñāna*, as static conceptualised *artha*, is the source of all error. That error is due to generality and conceptualisation is clearly admitted by all the three versions of Ātmakhyātivāda. It can be noticed that thus far the theory is only interested for logically determining the concept of error. That error is to take something as what it is not is only to explicate the defining mark of error. Here the problem is not

to account for perceptual errors. It is only a logical analysis of the nature of judgement. The nature of judgement is such that it can never be true of the real. It necessarily distorts the real by attributing certain external *rūpa* on it.

The Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas, apart from the minor doctrinal differences, agree that the logical referent of any judgement (*svalakṣaṇa*) is necessarily misdescribed in all instances of judging as judging necessarily implies misjudging and the general nature of the concept falls short of the particular. It is, only from the logical point of view and never from the factual point of view, asserted that all judgements are intrinsically erroneous. The argument, in this connection, is only to stress the significant logical point and is never engaged in a psychological analysis. The Vijñānavādins, too, are not engaged in accounting illusions, etc. but are only confined to analyse the nature of the judgement. Judgement being conceptualised necessarily distorts the non-conceptualised bare experience. However, the speciality in these philosophers is that unlike the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas, they emphasize the significant epistemological point that experiencing does not guarantee the nature of the content of experience. In this way, the objectivity and externality are repudiated and mere experiencing is only asserted. As such, this analysis has given rise to a sort of phenomenalistic epistemology. Now, to whatever form of epistemology the Vijñānavādins' view may lead to, one thing, however, remains certain that these Buddhist philosophers are not primarily engaged in the psychological issues. Their specific field is logical study of epistemological issues.

Both for the Vaibhāṣikas as well as the Sautrāntikas, the judgement, by its very nature, ever becomes confined to its own categories and concepts. It can never transcend itself (*Ātmakhyāti*) and because of this, it can never appropriately describe the bare referent (*svalakṣaṇa*). While trying to describe the *svalakṣaṇa*, the judgement, because of its inherent nature, puts some foreign forms (*rūpa*) which do not belong to the referent. Hence it is maintained that falsity of all judgements is only due to the predicative (*prakāratā*) aspect.

The Vijñānavādins, too, subscribe to the view that the

judgement, by its very nature, ever becomes confined to its own categories and concepts. It can never transcend its own realm. The only difference that can be marked between the views of the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika on the one hand and the view of the Vijñānavādin on the other hand is that while the former schools maintain the falsity of all judgements to be due to the predicative aspect alone the latter school maintains the falsity of all judgements to be both due to the predicative as well as the subjective (*idantā*) aspects. The sense of externality which is suggested by the admittance of 'this' as real is severely repudiated by the Vijñānavādins. It is, only from this point of view, concluded that neither something objective nor something subjective but only the bare experience that can be asserted finally. The *vijñāna*, as is already seen, transcends the dichotomy of both objectivity as well as subjectivity.

(2) ASATKHYĀTI

So far, the account of error in the three schools of Buddhism is discussed. Besides this account of error which is termed as *Ātmakhyāti* there is another view named as *Asatkhyāti* or *Śūnyakhyāti* which is often ascribed to the Mādhyamikas. No original Mādhyamika treatises like *Mūla-mādhyamika-kārikā* or *Vigraha Vyāvartaṁ*, clearly refer this term with explanation. Its reference is found in the writings of the rival schools of Indian philosophies including both the Hindu as well as the Jaina works.

Asatkhyātivāda, as exposed by these works, means that in erroneous perception there is merely the perception of something which is unreal (*asat*). In the shell-silver illusion, the silver that is perceived is neither real as something external nor even real as something internal. Therefore it is absolutely unreal. If the silver would have been externally real then there would not have been any scope for erroneous perception. If the silver would have been merely an internal idea then also there would have been no explanation with regard to its external manifestation. It is, as such, *asat* or *śūnya*. To put it in other words, it is the *asat* which is the object of perception in this context. Thus the erroneous perception is declared to

be 'non-being's apprehension'.[1] One becomes aware of the non-being of silver only when the erroneous perception is sublated by the valid perception.

From this account of the theory of *Asatkhyāti* it becomes clear that the silver which is perceived in the shell-silver illusion is really non-existent. It is neither the silver which was perceived in a different place previously nor is it a momentary silver exclusively limited to the moment of illusion. It is totally non-existent or *asat*. It is *asat* which is falsely perceived as *sat*, *i.e.*, silver. A totally non-existent is apprehended as existent. The silver in the shell-silver illusion being absolutely unreal nowhere exists. It neither exists in the present situation nor even anywhere else. Error arises in taking something totally non-existent as existent.

If the objective of Asatkhyātivāda is only to expose the unreality of silver as against its apparent reality then this theory is hardly disputable even by its rivals. Because all are to agree that in error that which appears to be real is actually not real. The silver that appears to be real in the shell-silver illusion is not real. This is what illusion ordinarily stands for. But the theory of *Asatkhyāti*, it is said, is not simply to advocate the unreality of the 'silver' alone. It is also maintained that according to this theory, whatever is perceived as the 'silver' is also mere non-being. That means the 'shell' which is ordinarily accepted to be real as against the 'silver' is also rejected by the present theory to be not really existing. *Asatkhyāti* stands for complete void or *śūnya*. And in that sense, both the ordinarily accepted erroneous perception as well as the valid perception are declared to be erroneous. Only the erroneous character of the 'shell' is not empirically known because of its practical utility. To put it in other words, while the 'silver' is taken as absolutely unreal, it is also implied by this theory that nothing real as the basis of this unreal 'silver' is even acceptable. Along with the rejection of error its locus (*adhiṣṭāna*) is also rejected. And it is this rejection of locus which is argued to be the distinguishing feature of the theory of *Asatkhyāti*.

1. S. Kuppuswamy Sastri: *op. cit.*, p. 123.

But here the Vedāntins, the Naiyāyikas and many others argue that how can a totally non-existent something at all be apprehended.[1] An absolute naught cannot even be conceived (*e.g.*, son of a barren woman) what to speak of its being perceived. It is a matter of experience that shell is misperceived as silver. This shows that something is being apprehended as something else. So the silver characterisation of the present object may be found to be wrong after later verification but that something as the locus of silver characterisation is positively present even at the time of error, there can be least doubt about it. Hence it is not the absolute nothing (*śūnya*) which is perceived as something existent (*sat*) but something is apprehended as some other thing. Shell in the form of 'this' remains, however, as the basis of silver-apprehension. So something existent appears as silver and not that non-existent appears as existent. Even if one agrees the point that the silver that is perceived in illusion is unreal yet the referent on which silver is perceived cannot be rejected as void or *śūnya*. The defect lies with Asatkhyātivāda that it not only negates silver but also the 'this' or the very basis of error along with error.

It is pointed out by way of defending the theory of Asatkhyāti that when the eyes are pressed the woolly mass of substances (*keśondrakas*) that appear before the eyes are without any locus. It is possible that a person while dreaming may have also another dream within that range of first dream. The second dream obviously does not have any real basis as that occurs only within another dream. So also it is argued that erroneous perception points at some unreal substance which has no real locus. It is argued that in error the *śūnya* is mistaken as shell and again this unreal shell is further taken to be silver.

But again such defence of this theory of error, it is maintained, is without any foundation. Because even the woolly substances appear in a real locus and also the original dream is possible only when there is real consciousness. No dream

1. *Vide*: "*Nirupākhyānasyāparokṣyābhāsagocaratvānupapatte*", Rāmakṛṣṇa, *op. cit.*, p. 50 and NM, pp. 177-178.

can occur unless there is the real basis of consciousness. It is this reality of locus which is always maintained by the Advaitins in a very forceful manner. The Post-Śaṁkaraites, while, elaborate the theory of *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* emphasize a positive character of error only to contrast their account of error from that of the Śūnyavādins.

Now, leaving the Advaitins' account of error for the present, it may be marked that even in the classical form the theory of *Asatkhyāti* does not stand for explaining the erroneous perception alone. It is not a theory by means of which the ordinary distinction between an illusory perception and a veridical perception can be well determined. The theory is distinctly not psychological when it recommends all cognitions (whether perceptual or non-perceptual) to be the cognitions of sheer non-being. The distinction between a true and a false cognition is itself challenged here from a logical point of view. By maintaining all cognitions to be the cognitions of *asat*, the theory logically seems to be not about illusion but about the concept of error as such. Neither the subjective knower (*jñātā*) nor the objective known (*jñeya*) are acceptable according to this theory. It is the *śūnya* or complete void which is the philosophical position of the Mādhyamikas.

But against such a nihilistic rendering of Mādhyamika philosophy it is pointed out by some modern authorities that 'Śūnya-vādins' like Nāgārjuna cannot be the propounders of absolute *śūnya*. For *śūnya* transcends only the four categories of thought (*catus-koti-vinirmukta*). Reality is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor both existent and non-existent nor different from existent and non-existent. This shows that Mādhyamika *śūnya* is not mere non-being or *asat* and hence the Asatkhyātivāda as exposed by the classical Hindu as well as the Jaina philosophers can never be said as the theory actually propounded by the Mādhyamikas. The Śūnya-vāda does not mean 'void' as 'No-reality' doctrine but merely 'No-view' about Reality.[1]

Though both silver as well as shell are, as argued above,

1. T.R.V. Murti: *op. cit.*, p. 313.
Vide: also S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 662-666.

said to be not ultimately real yet from the rejection of these empirical entities the transcendental reality is not rejected as mere void. It is said as neither *sat* nor *asat*, *etc.* because it transcends all empirical thought constructions. In this manner, the Mādhyamikas are rather presented as critics of all empirical phenomena but not as sheer nihilists. *Śūnya* is only significantly used in the Mādhyamika philosophy to repudiate all empirical entities. But the reality, as the *adhiṣṭāna* of all that are rejected as void, is however not denied. It is thought that this way of interpreting the Mādhyamika account of error in particular and its philosophy in general leads to the conclusion that both the Mādhyamika as well as the Advaita do not differ very much in their respective accounts of error as well as on the matter of philosophical speculation. Some writers even overtly assert that the Mādhyamikas are really the propounders of Anirvacanīyakhyāti.[1]

It is not my aim here either to justify or to refute the view that the Mādhyamika philosophy is similar to that of the Advaita. One thing can be marked that this modified version of the Mādhyamika theory of *śūnya* does not fit into the classical exposition of the Asatkhyātivāda.

Of course, in this connection, it is to be admitted that the Asatkhyātivāda as implying absolute void is not found to be discussed and elaborated by any Mādhyamika Buddhist but by some non-Buddhist philosophers. There is, therefore, much scope for doubting about its authenticity. Since no historical data with regard to its Buddhistic origin are yet available there remains much room for imaginary speculation on this issue.

But can it not be possible that the theory of *Asatkhyāti* be interpreted in a slightly different manner so that it would coherently fit into the general philosophical as well as the logical position of the Mādhyamikas? The trouble of incoherency lies only when *Asatkhyāti* is meant as the apprehension of something absolutely naught (*asat*). And from this explanation of illusory phenomenon the generalisation is framed that reality is essentially *asat* (absolute non-being), In this version the theory is hardly intelligible. Because, as it has been pointed

1. *Cf.* C.D. Sharma: *op. cit.*, p. 231.

out earlier, how can the absolute void be at all apprehended? Why not *Asatkhyāti* be meant as falsity (*asat*) of judgement (*khyāti*)? Grammatically there is no difficulty in adhering to this formulation. In fact this formulation of the theory fits better to the philosophical position of the Mādhyamikas. It also reveals the logical structure of the argument of the theory in a more intelligible form. The former formulation, *i.e.*, 'non-beings' apprehension' seems to be giving rise to unwarranted absurdity. But in the present formulation the falsity being the objective of *khyāti* would imply the judgement in question to be false. Let me elaborate.

Though the term '*khyāti*' in a wider context stands for knowledge in general in the philosophic consideration of truth and falsity it only refers to the judgemental aspect of it.[1] It is the judgement in the logical sense which is usually accepted to be either true or false in the Indian philosophical perspective. This significant point has been very clearly and forcefully maintained by the Nyāya logicians when they define true knowledge as that judgement which describes the referent in the appropriate manner and falsity as that judgement which misdescribes the referent. This Nyāya logical model, in a slightly different form, is also, as it has been already shown, accepted by the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṁsakas. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins, though agreeable to the philosophic discussion of knowledge in terms of judgement, yet finally redefine the referent of the judgement (*i.e.*, real in their terminology) in such a manner so that all judgements are shown to be true in the sense of correctly describing the real.

The Buddhist philosophers, in general, take an opposite move from that of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins. According to them, all judgements are necessarily false. A true judgement is logically inconceivable. If the model offered by the Nyāya logicians be taken to its logical climax then the Buddhist philosophers seem to argue that not only the ordinarily called false judgements but also the so called true judgements can also be shown as false. If in case of ordinarily called false judgement, falsity is due to misdescribing, then in the so called true judgement too,

1. *Vide*: Introduction *ante*.

since describing is equally involved, the logical possibility of its being false cannot be ruled out. It is from this logical possibility of all descriptive judgements being false, the Buddhists in general draw the persuasive negative conclusion that all judgements are false. The Vaibhāṣikas, the Sautrāntikas and the Vijñānavādins, initially though are in complete agreement, so far as this point is concerned, yet subsequently because of their distinctive philosophical views, interpret the bare logical referent of the judgement in such terminologies like *dharma* or *vijñānas*. But the Mādhyamikas most probably want to restrict the whole discussion to the logical level alone and do not want to commit to any form of positive ontology. That is why they neither want to term the referent as object (*artha*) nor as experience (*vijñapti*).

So far as error is concerned, the Mādhyamikas accept the general logical conclusion that it is only due to mispredication. A judgement like 'This is silver' is false when it predicates the silver characteristic over the referent which does not fit into it. But if the silver-predication is found to be wrong then the shell-predication is equally vulnerable. Because it also involves description. To describe the referent as shell also carries the logical possibility of being erroneous. In describing the referent as shell, no doubt, one takes the help of concepts and categories. The concepts are applied by means of classifying the referent under one universal or set of universals. There is, of course, every possibility of misclassification.

To put it in other words, a critical analysis of the logical nature of judgement reveals that each judgement turns out to be corrigible in character. It is only from this point of view and not necessarily from the point of view of any preconceived ontology, the Mādhyamikas are led to argue that all judgements are false. It is this falsificatory mark of all judgements that accounts for an intelligible rendering of the theory of *Asatkhyāti*. While in the classical version of Asatkhyātivāda it is said that the 'silver' in the judgement 'This is silver', is absolutely unreal, it should not mean that the 'silver' as an object is regarded to be absolutely unreal; it is only the silver-predication being applied in the present con-

text is regarded as false. The discussion of error which is made intelligible in the formal plane is misleadingly thought to have some material significance.

The Mādhyamikas, quite consistent to the general Buddhistic position, adopt the criticisms of concepts. While carrying this discussion to the logical end they conclude that the critique of concepts clearly reveals that the referent of any judgement is beyond all conceptual categories, and may thus be designated as *catus-koti-vinirmukta*. The Vijñānavādins' view that bare experience free from subject-object polarization can alone be finally asserted, is not approved by the Mādhyamikas. Because the Mādhyamikas point out that even by describing the referent as bare experience, there is, in principle, the chance of falsification. From a logical point of view it can only be consistently asserted that all descriptions carry the sense of falsification and, as such, no judgement can be said as true. The referent of any judgement can neither be described as *artha* nor as *vijñāna*. It transcends all descriptions and that is why it is said to be intrinsically empty of all contents and is regarded to be void.

5

The Advaita Theory of Error

Any discussion of error in the context of Indian philosophy cannot be said as comprehensive unless one takes the Advaita account of error into discussion. In fact, it is Advaita alone which is found to have given maximum importance to the discussion of error for the construction of its own philosophical position. *Māyā,* the popular expression for error has been so elaborately analysed and discussed in the entire Advaita literature that the whole system is called by many as *māyāvāda.*

Māyā, in the usual sense of the term, stands for cosmic illusion. It is very often taken for granted that the Advaita, by the very discussion of error, comes to the conclusion that the whole cosmic existence is *māyā* or illusory in essence. Even the rivals of the Advaitins take this *māyā* to be the central thesis of the Advaitic system. As the man, in the actual process of illusion, sees a second moon which does not exist, so also men see a visible world of many objects which do not exist. The different orthodox schools criticise the Advaita view vehemently for propagating the theory of error which ultimately reduces the whole world to illusion. Some of them have even charged the Advaita to be unorthodox on this account and have presented it as Buddhism in disguise. Particularly the theistic Vedāntins hardly find any difference between Advaitism and Buddhism. According to them, both the philosophies consider the world as illusory.[1]

1. "*māyāvādam asacchāstram pracchannam Bauddhameva ca*"—*Padma Purāṇa* quoted by Vijñāna Bhikşu in his *Sāṁkhya Darśanam.* In this connection, the Advaita saying "*mithyā pratyaya rūpaḥ . . . sarva-loka-pratyakṣa*" is sometimes compared with Mādhyamika saying "*anubhava eṣa mṛṣā*".

However, the question, whether the Advaita is Buddhism in disguise or not, is not here a very relevant point to discuss. It is only relevant to point out that according to the generally accepted version, the Advaita theory of error is an attempt to justify the view that the world is unreal and illusory.

The Advaita, as a distinct philosophical tradition, owes its origin mainly to the writings of Śaṁkara (788-820 AD). Before him, one, of course, finds the writings of Gauḍapāda (c. 7th century AD) who is also known as the advocate of the Advaita doctrine of non-duality. In his *Māṇḍūkya-Kārikā*, there are several passages which speak of the non-dual *Ātman* as alone real and the manifold world as unreal.[1] But the account of error, in particular, has not been so elaborately discussed by Gauḍapāda as it is found in Śaṁkara's works. Śaṁkara not only mentions the topic of error in his different works but devotes a full chapter on error which is added *ab extra* to his famous commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*. In fact Śaṁkara insists that any enquiry into the knowledge of *Brahman* must necessarily be presupposed by a clear analysis of the concept of error, what he calls as *adhyāsa*.

It is sometimes pointed out that Śaṁkara does not clearly advocate the classical Advaita theory of error, *i.e.*, *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* which is rather coined by the Post-Śaṁkaraites. It is, however, true that Śaṁkara in the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* neither mentions the term '*anirvacanīya*' nor the term '*khyāti*'. He has only made a reference to the rival accounts of error and has not elaborately discussed those different accounts. That error is indeterminable is nowhere clearly stated in the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* though the possibility of such a view is not completely ruled out. The term *anirvacanīya*' is in fact used by Śaṁkara himself in several places.[2] But it is mainly the later Śaṁkaraites who have elaborately discussed the Anir-

1. "Just as on a rope being definitely perceived as such, the false image disappears, and there appears the single perception that it is rope only; similarly, on the self being definitely ascertained as such the plurality of existence disappears." "*niścitayāṁ yathā rajjvām vikalpo . . . tadvad ātmaviniścayaḥ*", *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*, II.18.
2. *Vide*: VSS, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 328-29, and *Viveka cuḍāmaṇi*, Stanza 109.

vacanīyakhyātivāda and have tried to establish it over the other rival theories.

The classical theory of *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* is found in its detailed expression in the writings of Sureśvara (675-773 AD), Padmapāda (9th century AD), Prakāśātman, Vimuktātman, Śrīharśa (all 12th century AD) and Citsukhācārya (13th century AD) to name a few later Advaitins. Of course here it is also to be marked that the Anirvacanīyakhyātivāda, while interpreted and analysed by the later Advaitins, is found to have gone under many changes and ramifications. In some cases it is found to be nearer to *Anyathākhyāti* (especially in the works of the *Bhāmatī* school) while in others it is having an altogether different turn (especially in the works of the *Vivaraṇa* school). Even though Śaṁkara does not raise the question about the locus of error there is found to be a hot discussion about it among the later Advaitins. While the *Bhāmatī* school argues that *avidyā* has the *Brahman* as its object and the *jīva* as its support (*āśraya*), the *Vivaraṇa* school tries to justify that *Brahman* is both the support and the object of *avidyā*.[1] Again a distinction is made between *māyā* and *avidyā* by some later Śaṁkaraites while Śaṁkara himself is silent about all these.

Here in the present chapter, however, my main aim is to expound Śaṁkara's account of error and to show its relation to the well-known theory of *Anirvacanīyakhyāti*. My exposition of Advaita account of error will be based upon the detailed study of Śaṁkara's works alone with specific reference to his *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*.

Śaṁkara raises the problem of knowledge and error in the opening lines of his well-known *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*. He says that ordinarily men fail to distinguish between two opposite concepts (*pratyaya*), *viz.*, the subject (*viṣayin*) and the object (*viṣaya*). The superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of one concept upon the other or the qualities of one concept upon that of the other is due to ignorance (*avidyā*). Since all types of ordinary knowledge (*loka-vyavahāraḥ*) are based on the superimposition of self and not-self (*ātmanātmanoḥ*) and the *vice versa*, it is to

1. Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 105.

be admitted that ordinary judgement of all varieties is intrinsically erroneous from such logical point of view. Right knowledge (*vidyā*) consists only in knowing something as it is (*vastu-svarūpāyadhāraṇaṁ vidyām*). To take something as something else (*atasmiṁs tad buddhi*) is *adhyāsa*. The silver-characteristics when are superimposed upon the shell, the shell is no more known as it is but as something other than itself (*śuktikā hi rajatabadvabhāsate*). The moon, which is one, appears to be double (*ekaścandraḥ sadvitīyabat*).

It is taken for granted that from such a study of particular empirical illusions, Śaṁkara deduces his final philosophical conclusion that all empirical cognitions are involved with the confusion of one element with the other and hence are all unreal. If all these are accepted then with the unreality of the empirical cognitions the unreality of the world is evident. And Śaṁkara's whole philosophy is presented in such a manner as to show that the world is like a magic-show, intrinsically *prapañca* or illusory.

Śaṁkara's philosophy, after being understood as advocating illusionism, is criticised both by the rival orthodox philosophers as well as the modern critics. The orthodox philosophers criticise Śaṁkara as being too much influenced by the Buddhistic philosophy. Even if Śaṁkara overtly condemns the Buddhistic philosophy, these philosophers, as it has been pointed out already, think that the *māyāvāda* of Śaṁkara is never rooted in orthodox tradition (*i.e.*, *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*) but is borrowed from the Buddhistic reasoning. The modern critic charges Śaṁkara's illusionistic rendering of the world-phenomena as most absurd from the scientific point of view. By reducing the reality of the empirical world to sheer magical show, Śaṁkara might have become successful in framing a grand metaphysical system but surely he has failed in maintaining the unreality of the world-phenomena as a matter of fact.

In order to avoid this charge the modern exponents[1] of Śaṁkara Vedānta emphasize the different levels of reality (*sattā*) that are admitted by Śaṁkara. It is pointed out that the world-phenomena is not reduced to unreality like that of

1 *Cf.* Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II.

illusion or dream. The phenomenal reality of the world is never actually rejected by Śaṁkara. His declaring the world-phenomena to be *māyā* is only significant from the ultimate (*pāramārthika*) point of view. But the world is accepted to be as real as possible so long the ultimate reality is not realised. The phenomenal reality (*vyāvahārika sattā*) of the world is never denied. There is a definite distinction, said to have been maintained by Śaṁkara, between the phenomenal level and the illusory level (*prātibhāsika sattā*). The objects of dream, illusion and hallucination, though, are all said to be real as long as the illusory cognitions persist, yet they are all accepted to be unreal from the phenomenal point of view. While the illusory silver is real for the moment of illusion only, the actual silver is real phenomenally. The actual silver is not likewise rejected. It is marked that Śaṁkara, while criticising the Vijñānavādins, has clearly made the point that as the dream-experience is sublated, the waking-experience is not likewise sublated.[1]

But one can easily notice that this way of defending the Absolutistic philosophies like that of Śaṁkara or Nāgārjuna, who also makes a parallel distinction between *pāramārtha satya* and *samvṛti satya*, is rather found to be weak. If *pāramārtha* alone is respected from the philosophical point of view then there is nothing wrong in declaring the *vyāvahārika* world to be illusory in character. It is clearly maintained by Śaṁkara that the falsity of the knowledge of the world-phenomena is only realised when the ultimate knowledge of *Brahman* is attained. The world-phenomena is ever false, only its falsity is realised when Brahma-knowledge is attained. The analogy of the shell-silver and the double moon clearly suggests that the world is likewise unreal. From the final philosophic point of view there is no difference admitted between *vyāvahārika* and *prātibhāsika sattā*. If the Advaita philosophy aims at establishing reality as only non-dual then it does not mean much

1. VSS, II.II.29.

to talk about the three levels of reality.[1] In this connection, it is sometimes said that illusory phenomena is not totally unreal like that of barren woman's son. A distinction is shown to have been maintained by the Advaitins between the *prātibhāsika sattā* and the *tucca.* The former has at least a momentary existence while the latter is absolutely non-existent. But here also it can be pointed out that even the momentary existence of illusory object is clearly rejected after the illusion is sublated. When the erroneous perception of silver is replaced by the perception of shell, the 'shell' is treated as existent not merely at the time when it is actually perceived but also when the 'silver' was previously perceived. In other words, the 'shell' is only accepted to be real and the 'silver' is completely negated. To use Professor Bhattacarya's expression, that silver is 'no fact'.[2] If this point is admitted, then the phenomenal reality of the world is definitely having no philosophical significance. And if Śaṁkara's philosophy is the philosophy of non-dualism then the manifold world cannot but be unreal as the illusions and dreams are. According to him, the reality or the essence of a thing is that which persists through all its states.[3] And as such anything which is changeable and perishable becomes virtually unreal. If the self is ultimately real, the necessary conclusion is that all else is mere illusion or *māyā.*[4]

So far I have presented Śaṁkara's account of error as the tradition has presented it to be. If this account is accepted then the defect of illusionism seems to be unavoidable.

1. It is interesting to note that the Mīmāṁsakas too while criticising the *samvṛti sattā* of the Yogācāras offer a very similar point. "There can be no reality about illusory reality and hence, it cannot be a form of reality, if it is real, it cannot be illusory; and if it is illusory, it cannot be real", quoted by Dasgupta, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
2. K.C. Bhattacarya: *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. II, pp. 181-190.
3. *Vide*: "*eka-rūpeṇa hi avasthito yo'rthaḥ sa paramārthaḥ*", VSS, II.I.11, and "*yadviṣayā buddhir na vyabhicarati tat sat, yadviṣayā vyabhicarati tadasat*", *Gītā bhāṣya* of Śaṁkara, 2.16.
4. Dasgupta: *Indian Idealism*, Cambridge University Press, 1933, p. 163.

Modern critics have therefore pointed out that Śaṁkara's criticism of the Vijñānavāda is not consistent to his own view of world-appearance.[1] Śaṁkara's treatment of error (*adhyāsa*) is throughout taken in this traditional interpretation as something psychological. The concept of *adhyāsa* is made intelligible through the instances of empiric illusions like the shell-silver, the double moon, etc. And because the analogies of the shell-silver, etc. are given, it is taken for granted that *adhyāsa* is nothing but illusion. And as such the eternal *adhyāsa* of not-self over self is also a case of illusion in the same psychological sense.

But if one carefully goes through the whole *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, one can clearly find that Śaṁkara here never raises a point which is psychological in character. The problem of error, that he raises, is not psychological but purely logical.[2] In the very beginning of this *bhāṣya*, Śaṁkara points out that all our concepts which are distinct and different are precluded from any possibility of combination. Any attempt of combining these distinct and different concepts results in a coupling of true and false. Any coupling of the concepts like 'you' and 'I' does great violence against all the accepted principles of logic. The coupling of true with false is itself unreal.[3] But since no linguistic expressions are possible without joining ideas which are distinct and different, language by its very nature necessarily falsifies the real.

Śaṁkara's definition of *adhyāsa* "*Smṛtirūpaḥ paratra pūrvadṛṣṭābabhāsaḥ*" has been usually translated as "the

1. Asutosh Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
2. *Vide*: G. Misra: "The Logical Foundations of Śāṁkara Vedānta", The Srimanta Pratap Seth Lecture on Vedānta delivered at the 44th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, held at Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1969. It was subsequently published in *Bharati, The Utkal University Journal*, Vol. III, No. 4, July, 1969, pp. 95-111. For advancing a logical rendering of the concept of *adhyāsa*, I am greatly indebted to this lecture of Dr. G. Misra.
3. Vācaspati's rejoinder in this connection is interesting. He writes, in his *Bhāmatī*, that Śaṁkara uses *mithuni krutya* instead of *mithunaṁ* just to indicate the unreality of the coupling itself.

apparent presentation, in the form of remembrance to consciousness of something previously observed, in some other thing."[1] Here the term 'remembrance' has been understood in the sense of memory to exclude cases like recognition. The term *'rūpaḥ'* is translated here as likeness. That means the *adhyāsa* is not exactly identified with memory but is similar to memory. But here it may be pointed out that *'rūpaḥ'* in Śaṁkara Vedānta has been usually understood as not similarity but as mere f rm (*e.g., nāma-rūpaḥ* as names and forms). Śaṁkara, by the phrase *'smṛti-rūpaḥ'* does not compare *adhyāsa* with *smṛti* but suggests that erroneous cognition, in so far as it is cognition, is bound to take certain forms (*i.e.,* class characteristics or *jāti*) into account. To put the issue more elaborately, while in an illusion somebody perceives the 'shell' as the 'silver' he neither takes the 'silver' as something which he has perceived before nor again he takes it as something completely new, in the sense of not having any trace of it from before. Unless he applies the universal or class characteristic of silverhood to the referent of the present cognition at issue he can never judge the present referent as silver.[2] In order to cognise it to be silver he is bound to apply the form of memory. It is, in this sense, memory which is absolutely essential for all cognitions. No cognition whether erroneous or non-erroneous can be possible without taking the universal forms into consideration. And it is the memory which is the bearer of all such forms.

From this point of view not only to cognise the present object as 'silver', but also to cognise it as 'shell' becomes possible by taking memory into its fold. In both the cognitions, memory plays its role by supplying the forms. And

1. VSS, p. 4.
2. Padmapāda, in his *Pañcapādikā* makes it clear by saying that the manifested object only resembles the object remembered (*i.e.,* the appearance or *rūpaḥ* of the superimposed object is only similar to the appearance of the recollected object), but is not the thing (actually) recollected. "In the case of illusion", as the translator, Venkataramiah puts in the footnote, "it is not the very object of past experience that manifests itself but one belonging to that *jāti*." Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. CVII, pp. 17-18.

since these forms are not in the external referent but are applied to it from within, the referent is never cognised as it is but always as something already conceptualised. The bare referent is never known. All that is empirically known is only the conceptualised referent. It is, in this sense, not only the 'silver-cognition' is erroneous but also the 'shell-cognition' is erroneous.

In other words, here Śaṁkara, like many other Indian philosophers, is clearly not interested in discussing the psychological problem of accounting empirical errors like illusion, hallucination and dream. His primary concern is only to explicate the logical structure of the concept of error. If in erroneous cognition, error is due to the presence of concepts and forms, etc. then the non-erroneous cognition also being involved with concepts, etc. cannot logically be said as sacrosanct.

That Śaṁkara is not interested in erroneous perception but only analyses the concept of error becomes fully evident when in *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, he declares all types of ordinary knowledge as cases of superimposition of one concept (self) over the other concept (not-self). Since no linguistic judgement is possible without employing concepts and universals, judgement, as such, is said to be inadequate in comprehending the nature of the real referent. All empirical judgements are descriptive and as such these are likely to state more than what the referent actually is. It is to be marked here that the modern analytical philosopher also recognises like Śaṁkara that "there is no class of descriptive statements which are incorrigible."[1] Therefore these judgements are not dependable. In all such judgements the predicate is different from the subject. And once the difference between the subject and the predicate is allowed, the possibility of error cannot be ruled out.

Hence Śaṁkara's main interest is to disparage all the empirical judgements that are descriptive in character and he seems to have approved the non-empirical pure demonstrative expressions of identity like 'This is this' where no difference between the subject and the predicate is admitted. It is from

1. A.J. Ayer, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

this point of view, the identification expressions[1] (*akhaṇḍārthaka vākyas*) are given superior status over the relational expressions (*saṁsargābagāhi vākyas*) which relate one thing not to the same thing but to the other. The *mahāvākyas* like *Tat tvam asi* (That thou art), etc. are expressions where differences are withdrawn and thus there is pure identity.

But philosophers' search for pure demonstrative use of expressions in language is not found to be very much fruitful. "Purely demonstrative expressions are in their way secure; but only because the information which they give is vanishingly small."[2] It is, however, also true that Śaṁkara does not sanction absolute logical security to these demonstrative expressions. His fundamental aim is not to find out a catalogue of merely verbal tautologies and demonstrative expressions but to point out the limitations of the conceptual element which is logically inseparable from any linguistic expression. As such even the identification expression 'A is A' cannot be finally upheld from the Advaitic logical point of view. Because here also there is at least a logical difference between the first 'A' (subject) and the second 'A' (predicate). Hence the move, Śaṁkara takes, is the very denial of the linguistic expression itself. 'A is A' is, no doubt, better than 'A is B' or 'A is C' and in that sense it is nearest to truth but yet ultimately it also like others fails to reach the goal. The logical conclusion to which the Advaita is led is the very criticism of the use of language.[3]

Hence it seems evident that Śaṁkara's primary interest is to investigate the logical condition of error as such. Since all empirical judgements are involved with conceptualisation, relation and descriptions, these are all falsificatory in character from the logical point of view. That Śaṁkara is only interested in the conceptual analysis of error becomes very much clear when in the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya*, the opponent raises the objection

1. The *akhaṇḍārthaka* is here taken as identification just to distinguish it from the identity judgement like 'Reality is Reality' which is rather trivial or tautological.
2. A.J. Ayer, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
3. R. Das: "The Theory of Ignorance in Advaitism", contributed as one of the papers to *Ajñāna*, Calcutta Oriental Series, No. 26, London, Luzac & Co., 1933, pp. 13-18.

that *adhyāsa* is possible only in respect of the perceptible object, Śaṁkara retorts saying that there is no such rule as that. The judgement like 'The sky is dim' is made when people superimpose dimness upon the sky which is not a perceptible object. Śaṁkara's point is that attribution of general characteristics goes counter to the uniqueness of the thing described.[1] Description of the unique referent by means of a *rūpaḥ* is *avidyā*. His proposal is that language cannot represent the uniquely real and that true knowledge consists in knowing the unique as the unique, the 'that' as the 'that' and not as the 'what'. *Brahma-jñāna* consists in knowing a thing as it is. That is why such knowledge is said to be possible by means of *svarūpa lakṣaṇa* alone and not by *taṭastha lakṣaṇa*.

Adhyāsa is claimed by Śaṁkara to be beginningless and natural (*naisargika*). For there is no occasion when any linguistic expression can describe the 'that' as the 'that'. In this sense, Reality is not grasped by the human estimation or intellect (*naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā*). The right knowledge can be possible only when the intellect is guided by the direction of discriminating faculty of *viveka*. It is to clearly discriminate the thing that is *nitya* from that of *anitya*. For any coupling of *nitya* (eternal) with *anitya* (non-eternal) is *adhyāsa*. If all these are accepted then one can say that Śaṁkara's programme is not of discovering any fact, it is rather a programme of analysing and investigating the mode of our using language and employing concepts. The illusionistic interpretation of world-phenomena is not warranted from his account of error. His philosophy only aims at pointing the inadequacy of language. It is a critique of concepts and judgements. He has nothing to say with regard to the actual state-of-affairs.

While dealing with the perceptual knowledge, Śaṁkara argues like a philosophical critic. He doubts the certainty of perceptual knowledge. Though the Post-Śaṁkaraites distinguish between the *Sopādhika adhyāsa* (error with limiting adjunct) and the *Nirupādhika adhyāsa* (error without any limiting adjunct), Śaṁkara himself does not maintain such a distinction.

1. G. Misra, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

According to him, no perceptual cognition is logically free from any limiting adjunct (*upādhi*). It is, however, true as a matter of fact that the clear crystal "does not become dim through its conjunction with a limiting adjunct in the form of red colour; for that it is pervaded by the quality of dimness is altogether erroneous notion."[1] But the point that is raised here is that, can one ever perceive a thing except under some background conditions? One has to always perceive the object of reference under some amount of light and what quality one perceives in the thing will be determined by the nature of light. The crystal appears white when seen under clean sunlight. "If red colour is not the real quality of the thing designated as crystal, why should whiteness constitute its real nature?"[2] It can be marked that here the argument is not at all empirical but purely logical. Even to confuse shell as silver, which is taken as an example of *nirupādhika adhyāsa*, is not possible without the presence of *upādhi*. The qualities of silver are wrongly superimposed upon the 'this'. As it has been shown earlier, from the logical point of view, both the judgements 'This is silver' and 'This is not silver; this is shell' are equally vulnerable. Therefore, Śaṁkara maintains, "What is merely due to a limiting adjunct cannot constitute an attribute of a substance, and the limiting adjuncts are, moreover, presented by nescience only."[3]

Some Advaitins take pain to analyse the different psychological causes of empirical illusion. Those are said to be: *pramātṛ-dōṣa* (the blemishes associated with the perceiver), *pramāṇa-dōṣa* (something wrong with the means of perception) and *prameya-dōṣa* (the object of cognition being placed very far). But these differentiations are not at all relevant from Śaṁkara's point of view. He is not busy in finding out the different psychological conditions for erroneous perception. His business is not to explain the erroneous phenomena but to logically analyse the concept of error. The point that he most emphasizes is that all perceptual knowledges, since are

1. VSS, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 158.
2. G. Misra, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
3. VSS, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

involved with the *upādhis*, cannot be maintained as logically unchallengeable.

The logical nature of the argument concerning error becomes still more clear when one examines the arguments advanced by Śaṁkara for dreams and hallucinations. The dream-experience is accepted to be unreal only when it is replaced by a more coherent waking-experience. But as long as the dream continues, such experience is accepted to be as real as the waking-experience. So also our waking-experience is accepted to be real as long as it is not replaced by a more coherent experience. But that does not rule out the logical possibility that it won't be replaced by any further experience. In other words, so far as this logical possibility of doubt is taken into account, there is no difference between the dream-experience and the waking-experience. There can be every possibility of doubt of *what* one experiences both in dream as well as in waking state. But that there is *experience as such* both in dream and in the waking state cannot be denied. The mere experience of reality is not at all challenged. It is true that while I dream or I am awake, I do not mean that I simply imagine things before me. So the experience of mine at least suggests that there is a reality which is the referent of my experiencing. That can never be denied. *That* is always certain though the *what* of it can always be doubted. Error consists in applying the *what* upon the *that*.

From the nature of these arguments, it becomes evident that Śaṁkara's doubt of the reality of the waking-experience is not from any factual point of view. Always it is from the standpoint of logic. Logically one can never be certain that the waking-experience will not be turned into a dream. The same sceptical argument is advanced over the phenomena of hallucinations. One regards the hallucinatory dagger to be unreal because it is sublated in the subsequent experience of the empty space. But there is no logical certainty that the empty space that is subsequently experienced will not again be corrected by some other experience. So from this point of view, as in dreams so also in hallucinations the sublating experience is no better than the sublated experience. If illusion, dream and hallucina-

tion are regarded to be unreal because of the presence of certain limiting conditions then the waking-experience too being not completely free from limiting conditions can never be regarded as real.

Thus it can be noticed that Śaṁkara's account of error is well-connected with his observations on dreams and other abnormal perceptions. In fact the sceptical challenge that he advances in the context of dreams and hallucinations, follows necessarily from his criterion of *adhyāsa*. If *adhyāsa* means 'illegitimate transference of opposite concepts' then in all kinds of empirical judgements including those derived from perceptions error is necessarily involved. There seems to be no escape from this. It is only from this point of view alone that the knowledge regarding the phenomenal world is challenged as *māyā*. Śaṁkara precisely questions the certainty of empirical judgements. The doubt that he casts is, as indicated before, not factual but purely logical. The practical distinction between valid perception and erroneous perception is never disputed by Śaṁkara. Practically the 'snake' in the 'rope-snake' illusion is unreal and the rope is real. No doubt has been thrown against the actuality of rope and the illusoriness of snake. It is only argued that if the 'snake cognition' is replaced by the 'rope cognition' then there is no logical ground to suppose that the 'rope cognition' will not be replaced by some further cognition. It is the logical possibility alone which rejects all particular experience and admits the bare experience of the pure existence. That something is presented, as the bare referent of all cognitions cannot, however, be denied. That is what is termed as *adhiṣṭāna*. But any characterisation over this *adhiṣṭāna* is a case of *adhyāsa*. And all such characterisations over the *adhiṣṭāna* are possible by means of linguistic descriptions. Hence language is said to be poisoned from its very origin. It necessarily distorts the uncharacterised, indescribable real, *i e.*, *Brahman* by characterising and describing it. By attributing characteristics, language brings in plurality into the *asaṅga* and *nirguṇa Brahman*. 'Language represents the unique as the instance of a class, the non-relational as relational, the non-qualified as qualified.'[1]

1. G. Misra, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

So far I have only expounded Śaṁkara's account of error and I have come to the conclusion that Śaṁkara is not involved in a psychological problem for accounting erroneous perception. He is not found to be such a metaphysician who takes the world-phenomenon as illusory like the fact of erroneous perception. He is not in search of a causal explanation for erroneous perception. Śaṁkara criticises the nature of concepts or class-ideas which are the necessary part of language. That all the linguistic judgements are dubitable and falsifiable in character is concluded only by studying and analysing the nature and function of language in relation to its referent. So it is the philosophy of language around which Śaṁkara's discussion of error is actually carried on.

His criticism of language can be exposed from two points of views. It is argued that no linguistic judgement is possible without joining at least two opposite concepts, *viz.*, subject and predicate. And since these two concepts are, by nature, different from each other, the very attempt of combining them by means of a linguistic judgement is to violate all the accepted principles of logic. Subject and predicate are logically of two different types. The former is the pure referent and the latter, a mere descriptive. Since they are of totally different types they can never be conjoined. But language can never be possible without such conjoining of subject with predicate. Hence language is argued to be defective from its very origin. Thus far, it can be marked that it is only from the logical point of view Śaṁkara becomes a critic of language. But besides these he also maintains from an epistemological point of view that no linguistic judgement, that is descriptive in character, can ever be known as infallible or incorrigible. Since describing implies misdescribing, all descriptive judgements are in principle falsifiable. It is this mark of corrigibility of all descriptive judgements that is shown by Śaṁkara as the very weakness of language. The criticism of language is thus advanced from the standpoint of logic and epistemology. A psychological rendering is, therefore, not warranted here.

Now the next point, which needs to be discussed in this connection, is that how is this account of error presented in the *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* related to the classical theory of *Anirvacanīyakhyāti.* It is usually maintained that according to the Anirvacanīyakhyātivāda, the object of the erroneous apprehension is neither real (*Sat*), nor unreal (*Asat*), nor both real and unreal (*Sadasat*), but is neither real nor unreal (*Sadasat vilakṣaṇa*). While applying this version of the theory to the instances of emipirical illusions, *viz.*, 'shell-silver', it is said that the 'silver' that is perceived, cannot be said as absolutely real. For in that case the 'silver-cognition' would not have become replaced by the subsequent cognition of the 'shell'. Nor can it be said that the 'silver' is totally unreal like a barren woman's son. While the latter is absolutely inconceivable the former is not only conceivable but is also perceptible. The third alternative, that the object of illusion, *i.e.*, 'silver' is both real and unreal, is equally inadmissible as such an alternative, according to the Advaitins, is self-contradictory.[1] Hence the only alternative, left to be accepted, is that the object 'silver' in the illusion is neither real, nor unreal; it is simply indeterminable (*anirvacanīya*).

I have indicated certain grounds in the introduction as to why the interpretation of the *Khyātivādas* in general and the *Anirvacanīyakhyāti* in particular should not be made in terms of such ontological assumption regarding the nature of the object of erroneous apprehension. I have offered an alternative suggestion according to which the different *khyātivādas* are presented as the different theories regarding the nature of the judgement. While the Satkhyātivāda is said as advocating for the truth of all judgements, the Asatkhyātivāda is said as advocating for the falsity of all judgements. The Ātmakhyātivāda is interpreted as supporting either the external referentiality of all judgements or the mere awareness as the referentiality of all judgements. In the Akhyātivāda, while the truth of all judgements is admitted, the error is just presented as 'no-judgement'. In both the Viparītakhyātivāda and the Anyathākhyātivāda, it is maintained that the true

1. *Vide*: Śaṁkara's criticism of Jaina philosophy, VSS, II.II.33.

judgement is to describe the referent in the appropriate manner and the false judgement is to describe the same in an opposite or different manner. The term '*anirvacanīya*' can likewise be said here as qualifying the judgement.

In analysing the nature of judgement, Śaṁkara first distinguishes between sense and nonsense. While judgements in general are having sense, the self-contradictories like barren woman's son, etc., are regarded to be nonsense (*tucca*). The self-contradictory expressions are inconceivable and as such the question of truth and falsity in cases of those expressions is simply irrelevant. Those are not judgements proper. In the context of judgement alone, the question of truth and falsity can significantly be raised. The judgement 'This is silver' is regarded as false because it is sublated by the correcting judgement 'This is shell'. Because the judgement 'This is shell' is not likewise sublated ordinarily, this judgement is regarded as true. But Śaṁkara points out that if the former judgement is regarded as false due to its contingent character then the so called true judgement too cannot be said as true because here also the contingent character is not completely excluded. In other words, it cannot be shown that the so called correcting judgement 'This is shell' won't be sublated. There is no logical guarantee that such judgements are not affected by their contingent character. Hence, the synthetic judgements, which are not yet falsified, cannot even be said as true. That they are in principle falsifiable cannot be denied. Though they cannot be said as false, they can neither even be said as true. Because they are neither true nor false nothing determinate can be said about them. They are, therefore, indeterminable. It is this character of falsifiability that is the main point of emphasis in the arguments advanced by Śaṁkara.

If truth or right knowledge consists in knowing something as it is (*vastu-svarūpāvadhāraṇam vidyāṁ*) then no judgement can be treated as true. There is always the logical possibility that any judgement, while describing the referent, is very likely to go beyond the referent. Because describing involves misdescribing. So from the logical point of view, all linguistic expressions are never incorrigible and are therefore falsifiable

in principle. According to Śaṁkara any synthetic judgement, in order to be significant, implies its negative. The opposite of any synthetic judgement is not logically inconceivable. If a thing is described as red it does not imply that the red-characterisation intrinsically belongs to the thing. If under one condition, red-characterisation is taken as appropriate then under other conditions, characterisations other than red can equally be taken as appropriate. This shows that characterisations are due to the external conditions and never intrinsically belong to the thing itself. Hence all descriptive judgements are in principle fallible and can never be absolutely true. Of course, from this it should not necessarily follow that the so called true judgements are false. Because, as pointed out earlier, their falsificatory mark is not yet fully ascertained. Śaṁkara, however, grants the synthetic judgements concerning phenomenal order to be genuine, though falsifiable from the standpoint of logic. These descriptive judgements are factually significant though do not stand to the scrutiny of logical test. If these observations are granted then it may seem clear why according to Śaṁkara the ordinarily called true judgements are neither true (*sat*)[1] nor false (*asat*).

The suggestion, that these judgements may be relatively true and relatively false, is ruled out from the beginning in an absolutistic logical framework. For an absolutist, there can be no compromise in matters regarding truth and falsity. Whatever is true, is true and whatever is false, is false. The logical criterion does not admit any degree. Hence the nature of these judgements is such that they cannot be determined by any of the logical categories.

The Anirvacanīyakhyātivāda, though is not explicitly mentioned and discussed in any of Śaṁkara's works, yet is, thus, not found to be inconsistent to the analysis of error presented by Śaṁkara himself. Following Śaṁkara's view-point, it can be maintained that the Anirvacanīyakhyātivāda is never about the ontological status of the object of erroneous perception. Here the Advaitins' main interest is concerned

1. In Sanskrit language, *Sat* stands for both real and true. Here in the context of judgement, true, being more appropriate, is adopted.

only with the nature of linguistic judgement that is the bearer of all forms of human knowledge. It is the analysis of the nature of the judgement which engages the philosopher throughout his philosophising. What is the status of judgement? Is it true or false, or both true or false or neither true nor false?

But such a kind of philosophical programme, which is solely confined to the logical analysis of linguistic judgements that involve concepts, classes and categories, has been totally misconceived by the Post-Śaṁkaraites. A programme for the logical analysis of the judgement is totally misunderstood. And as such irrelevant ontological assumptions regarding the object of erroneous apprehension are advanced. As such, attempts are made to account for the locus of *avidyā*. While the *Bhāmatī* tradition insists *Brahman* to be the object and *jīva* as the support of *avidyā*, the *Vivaraṇa* tradition insists, on the other hand, *Brahman* to be the support as well as the object of *avidyā*. Again Sureśvara attempts to interpret *avidyā* in a mystical way. To him "*Avidyā* is based and yet at the same time it is a baseless illusion opposed to all reason and cannot stand a logical scrutiny even as darkness cannot stand the sun."[1]

1. "*Seyam bhrāntir nirālambā sarvanyayāvirodhini sahate na vicāram sa tamo yad vad divākarom*", *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Sureśvara, III, 66 (Ed. by Prof. M. Hiriyanna, Bombay, 1925).

Conclusion

Now one is to bring things summarily together. In the introduction, I was mainly concerned to point out that the classical theories of error in Indian philosophy are not theories in the scientific sense. These theories are not aimed at tracing the various factors that operate in actual process of illusion, hallucination and dream. A psychological rendering of these theories is shown to be misleading. To me, it seems evident that the classical Indian philosopher is not so much interested in questions like 'How is erroneous perception possible?' and 'What are the causal conditions for a particular piece of erroneous cognition?' The discussion of error is always advanced with a view to explicate the logical structure of the concept of error. Instances of illusions, hallucinations, etc., serve merely the purpose of illustration. I also found it difficult to accept the view that these theories of error centre round their discussion over the ontological nature and status of the object of erroneous cognition. I have shown certain grounds which definitely weaken such a view. This metaphysical rendering certainly clouds the logical and epistemological significance of the discussion of error that the classical Indian philosopher actually advances. As against the psychological and metaphysical renderings I have offered another interpretation of these theories by which at least the logical significance of the nature of the dispute between the rival theories becomes definitely more intelligible. To me, it appears that it is not the object but the *judgement* of error that actually interests the classical philosopher. I have taken *khyāti* as meaning judgement and then have shown that the different theories are actually engaged in a sort of judgemental analysis. This analysis of judgement is only having the logical and epistemological significance. It is not concerned either with any form of psychologism or that of ontologism.

In the first chapter I have presented the Viśiṣṭādvaita theory of error. It seems, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, while discussing error, are only concerned to contend the truth of all judgements. I have come to the conclusion that such a view regarding the truth of all judgements is reached not so much by studying the detailed workings of the nature of judgements but by a sort of redefining the referent of the judgement. Such redefinition is shown to have been possible by means of sticking to a specific form of metaphysical hypothesis like that of *pañcikaraṇa.* The Viśiṣṭādvaitins' discussion of error, though, centres round the judgement, yet the analysis of error is not so much carried from a rigorous logical point of view; rather very often the analysis is found to have been based on some *a priori* metaphysical assumption. The Viśiṣṭādvaitins, by admitting the valid character of the so called erroneous judgement, are shown to have admitting the degrees of truth and falsity.

In the second chapter I have discussed the Akhyātivāda and the Viparītakhyātivāda. Akhyātivāda like Satkhyātivāda argues for the truth of all judgements. But this point of the Akhyātivādins is not supported by any metaphysical stipulation regarding the nature of the referent. It is shown that the truth of all judgements is admitted because of the *a priori* assumption in the field of epistemology that knowledge, so far as it is knowledge, can never be false. The so called erroneous judgement is reinterpreted by the Akhyātivādins as 'no-judgement' while the Satkhyātivādins interpret this erroneous judgement as true of the referent.

Viparītakhyātivāda appears to me to be more consistent so far as the analysis of the concept of error is concerned. Instead of having any prior metaphysical stipulation or any *a priori* epistemological assumption, the Bhāṭṭas attempt at distinguishing the true judgement from the false one strictly from a rigorous logical point of view. They are not so much engaged in redefining the concept of error according to certain *a priori* standard or stipulation. They are only interested in explicating the logical structure of the judgement. If the judgement describes the referent in the appropriate manner,

it is regarded to be true and if the judgement fails to do this and describes the referent in an opposite manner, it is taken as false. The charge that this Bhāṭṭa account of error is inconsistent with their acceptance of the theory of intrinsic validity of knowledge is shown by me to be completely misconceived and unfounded. The self-validity of knowledge and the acceptance of positive error are not advanced from the same point of view but from two different contexts.

I have discussed the Nyāya theory of error in the third chapter. So far as logical plane is concerned I do not find any fundamental difference between the Anyathākhyātivāda and the Viparītakhyātivāda. Like the Bhāṭṭas, the Naiyāyikas too are only interested in unravelling the logical structure of the concept of error. While doing this, they distinguish error from truth, knowledge and other cognate concepts strictly from the logical point of view. Neither the Naiyāyikas nor the Bhāṭṭas are, according to me, engaged in the psychological problem of accounting the actual process that involve in illusion, hallucination, etc. Both *anyathā* as well as *viparīta* are only logical concepts and any psychological or metaphysical rendering of such terms certainly cloud the significance of the nature of the discussion. While presenting the Naiyāyika theory of error from such logical point of view, I have, however, clearly distinguished the views of some later Naiyāyikas from the views of the earlier ones. It is some later Naiyāyikas who, according to me, fully misconceived the logical programme of analysis initiated by the early Naiyāyikas and have introduced certain form of unnecessary psychologism by taking an extraordinary form of perception, *viz.*, *Jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*. The discussion of error which is quite intelligible in the conceptual level has mistakenly been thought of having some psychological significance.

While discussing the Buddhistic theory of error in the fourth chapter, I have concentrated on the Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika, the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika schools. I have analysed the different senses in which the theory of *Ātmakhyāti* can be acceptable to the Vaibhāṣika, the Sautrāntika, and the Yogācārā. My findings suggest that these

Buddhist philosophers, while dealing with the concept of error, are only confined to logic and epistemology. The falsity of all judgements is maintained not because of any preconceived metaphysical assumption. This conclusion is reached by a logical analysis of the nature of judgement. I have avoided the captions like realism and idealism as far as possible with a view to exhibiting the logical structure of the nature of the arguments that these Buddhist philosophers advance in the most unadulterated form.

The Mādhyamikas, according to me, talk about the falsity of all synthetic judgements not from any factual point of view but purely from the standpoint of logic. They base this conclusion not on the findings obtained from the empirical source but purely on the logical analysis of the nature of judgement. Their logical analysis may be shown as defective, but that is another matter.

The last chapter discusses the Advaita theory of error. Here, I have confined myself to Śaṁkara's account of *adhyāsa*. My conclusion, here, is that Śaṁkara while talking about *adhyāsa* is not raising a psychological issue regarding illusion, hallucination and dream. He, like a philosophical critic, throws a challenge regarding the authenticity of the so called true judgements. If the false judgements are declared as false because of their contingent character then, Śaṁkara argues, the so called true judgements too cannot be said as true because here also the contingent character is not completely excluded. Hence these judgements can neither be said as true nor even as false (because these are not yet falsified). Hence these empirical judgements can be characterised as indeterminable.

While expounding the logical structure of Śaṁkara's account of error I have come to the conclusion that Śaṁkara first distinguishes between sense and nonsense. He adheres to the point that the question of truth and falsity can only be raised in the context of significant judgements which do not involve self-contradiction. A judgement is true, if it is adequate to the true nature of the thing. Accepting this criterion of true judgement, Śaṁkara comes to the conclusion that no

synthetic judgement, even if quite significant from the practical point of view (*vyavahāra*), can be said as true. Because there is, in principle, always the chance of falsifiability. Even if it is granted that the so called true judgements are not yet falsified it does not necessarily follow that those judgements will not be falsified. Hence these are said as *anirvacanīya.*

To put it briefly, the Viśiṣṭādvaitins, the Akhyātivādins, the Buddhists and the Advaitins are all interested in the judgemental analysis while discussing the concept of error. All of them, in one way or other, try for a revision of the established concepts. But the Viparītakhyātivādins and the Anyathākhyātivādins do not attempt for any form of revision of concepts as that would blur the very distinction between truth and error.

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Name Index

Subject Index

Dr Bijayananda Kar (born in October, 1940) is on the teaching staff at the Post-Graduate Department of Philosophy, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. He is the author of two books *Samkhya Darsana; Dharma Darsana O Manavata-vada* and a monograph *Analytical Studies in the Samkhya Philosophy*. Dr Kar has also published more than thirty research articles which are printed in journals of global repute. He has also contributed in the volumes *Quest for Truth* Ed. K. K. Mittal; *Mahima Dharma and Darshana* Ed. D. Panda.